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AUGUSTINIAN SERMONS

SECOND SERIES

AUGUSTINIAN SERMONS

BY

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TO · THE · BLESSED · VIRGIN · MARY
THE · IMMACULATE · MOTHER · OF · JESUS
CHRIST · THE · ETERNAL · SON · OF · GOD
THE · CO-REDEMPRESS · WITH · HIM
IN · THE · WORK · OF · OUR · SALVATION
I · DEDICATE · THIS · BOOK

FOREWORD

THAT the first series of "Augustinian Sermons" brought forth such praise and encomiums from competent critics was indeed much to the surprise and pleasure of the author. To them he now offers his most sincere and heartfelt thanks.

The first edition of that series was exhausted in less than four months. He now ventures to present to the public a second series, and hopes that, with the blessing of God, it may be as popular as the first, and may draw souls to His love.

It may be here said that the second series, as well as the first, is intended indeed for the Clergy but not for them solely. The plan of the author is to give to the better-educated of the laity also, in popular and easily understood form, treatises on the principal truths of our religion. If this series will find favor, with the blessing of God, he hopes to bring out more.

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AUGUSTINIAN SERMONS

ON IMPURITY

“Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which you are.”
(I. Cor. iii. 16, 17.)

SYNOPSIS

Chastity raises man above the brute.—Mary the most chaste of all creatures.—The purity of St. John.—Purity most honored in heaven.—Hatred of God for impurity.—Carefulness of the preacher in this matter.—What is prohibited?—Scripture proofs.—Public manifestations of God’s hatred of impurity. Onanism.—God never condones impurity.—Impurity is the most prevalent vice.—God and the passions.—Impurity lowers man to the brute.—Some deny this.—The standard of the Church.—Impurity of the ancient world.—Purity preserves society.—Virginity.—Marriage.—Different kinds of impurity.—Gravity of impurity.—The judgment of the world.—Veiled and protected vice.—Immodest dress and dancing.—Warnings and means to resist.—Moving pictures.—Bad reading.—Impure speech.—Punishment of impurity.—Divorce.—Disease.

CHASTITY of soul and body is the most lovable virtue: it is pre-eminently the quality which raises man above the brute and makes him more akin to the angels. Chastity ennobles the fallen children of Adam and renders them very pleasing in the sight of God. This is the virtue that more than all others shines out so prominently in the holiest creature that God ever made, and on account of which she was chosen from all the daughters of Eve to be the Mother of His

Son. This is the virtue, rather than sacrifice, which prompted the inquiry to the angel who announced to Mary that she was destined to become the Mother of God, how it could be so: "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" And the angel having explained, "Mary, said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word."¹

This is the virtue which made St. John more beloved by Jesus Christ than all the other Apostles, and by reason of which he leaned his head upon the bosom of his Saviour at the Last Supper, and was given by Him, dying upon the cross, as a son—a second son—to His bereaved Mother.

This is the virtue that the same St. John says in the Apocalypse is most honored in heaven, because those who practised it on earth are chosen to be the immediate attendants of Jesus the All-Holy. "These are they who are not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."²

As the virtue is so holy and so beloved of God, the opposite vice must be correspondingly sinful and detested by Him. The virtue of purity is sullied and defiled by the vice of impurity, that is, by the indulgence of all unlawful carnal pleasure in thought and in act. As this vice has always existed, and at the present day is so prevalent, it is necessary for the preacher to warn his audience against it, and give remedies to those who may be infected by it. But at the same time he and those to whom he speaks must be careful, prayerful, and reticent in this matter, lest either become defiled in dealing with a subject so insidious, so powerful, and so appealing to the natural passions of men. "He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled with it,"³ says the Holy Scripture. And so,

¹ Luke i. 34, 38.

² Apoc. xiv. 4.

³ Ecclus. xiii. 1.

as modestly as possible but yet directly and truthfully, we are to treat of this wide-spread evil.

All impure thoughts, all impure desires, all impure actions, are strictly forbidden, and, when freely and deliberately consented to, are always mortal sins, separating the soul from the friendship of God. That this is true is abundantly proved from the clear and explicit declaration of the Holy Scriptures. Our Blessed Saviour says: "From the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications: . . . these are the things that defile a man." ⁴

St. Paul says that impurity defiles both soul and body. "Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" ⁵ And he tells us the punishment allotted to those who defile this temple in these words: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are, fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury: . . . of which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God." ⁶ And again, the same Apostle condemns impure language: "Fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints." ⁷

In many places of the Holy Scripture impurity is called abominable and detestable in the sight of God. In the book of Leviticus, which treats of the Jewish rites and ceremonies, the Lord makes this threat as regards all impurity, but especially unnatural lusts: "Every soul that shall commit any of these abominations shall perish from the midst of his people." ⁸ And St. John in the Apocalypse says that the impure "shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone." ⁹ The strength of this statement is

⁴ Matt. xv. 19, 20.

⁵ I. Cor. vi. 19.

⁶ Gal. v. 19, 21.

⁷ Ephes. v. 3.

⁸ Levit. xviii. 29.

⁹ Apoc. xxi. 8.

in this, that they are not his words, but the very words of Christ Himself.

If we think of the public, visible manifestations of God's displeasure towards this vice, we can gather something of the hatred He has for it. God is infinitely just, He is infinitely merciful. In fact, He is Justice and Mercy. And He never inflicts any punishment except what the crime itself deserves, but rather He may and often does inflict less punishment. Yet we have world-known instances of severe punishment for impurity. First in the Deluge, for even then "the earth was corrupted before God, and was filled with iniquity. And when God had seen that the earth was corrupted (for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth)"¹⁰ by the horrible excesses of lust, He brought on the Deluge and destroyed this people. Again, we have the example of Sodom and Gomorrha, whose names are a synonym for unnatural lust, destroyed by fire from heaven. "And the Lord said: The cry of Sodom and Gomorrha is multiplied, and their sin is become exceedingly grievous. And the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrha fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven."¹¹ Again, there is the well-known example of the man Onan, who defiled himself and frustrated his marriage obligations, as so many do these days. "And therefore the Lord slew Him, because He did a detestable thing."¹² Several other equally well-known cases could be brought out from the Old Testament, but these are enough to show God's anger, manifested even on earth, against the impure.

God never changes. His hatred of sin, and especially of impurity, is just the same now as it ever was. True, we have not now such terribly visible signs of His displeasure as I have just mentioned,

¹⁰ Gen. vi. 11, 12.

¹² Gen. xxxviii. 10.

¹¹ Gen. xviii. 20; xix. 24.

but that does not prove that He condones this sin, for one moment's reflection will make us see that the real and effective punishment of sin is in eternity. As has already been said, sins against impurity exclude those who are guilty of them from the kingdom of heaven, and condemn them to everlasting torments, if repentance does not take place. It is surely the better part to live a pure life than to expose oneself to a punishment immeasurably greater than any we can think of on earth. It is foolish to take the risk of repentance afterwards, for you can never be sure of that, and you may die in sin. As we all know only too well, there are many other vices in the world, but the vice of impurity in comparison with the others is as a gentle river to a roaring flood. This vice is as old as man, as wide-spread on the earth as the human race, and has caused more sorrow, more trouble, and more evil than all the others.

On this roaring flood, old men and women, young men and women, the rich, the poor, the learned, the ignorant, the high society of the world as well as the low, the cultured and the uncultured, are tossed to and fro, sometimes rising to the surface of the filthy torrent, and again submerged beneath its foul waves. Like to the mighty force of waters that break over the dam and rushing down inundate the country below, so this mighty force of impurity breaks over the world, and drowns in its depths all those who are not saved by the grace of God.

All the passions of man are implanted in his soul by his Creator, but they must be restrained by his own intelligence, and directed by his will. For just as a young horse has to be broken by the trainer to the use of bit and bridle and harness, or otherwise he is ungovernable, and may kill those who use him, so the passions have to be brought under the subjection of reason or they will ruin their possessor. It is either one thing

or the other: man is ruled by his passions, comes wholly under their sway, is their slave; or he rules them, according to right reason, subjects them to it, and becomes their master. There is no passion in the soul so strong as the animal passion of sensuality; that is to say, the desire for the gratification of the sexual instinct. "Sensuality is a certain inferior power in the soul. Reason is a higher power in the soul,"¹³ and this inferior power, or sexual desire, must be governed by reason, or untold evils will be, as they have always been, visited upon the individual and upon society in general.

As a great writer, one who is not a Catholic, has said: "The feeling of all men and the language of all nations, the sentiment which though often weakened is never wholly effaced, that this appetite, even in its most legitimate gratification, is a thing to be veiled and withdrawn from sight, all that is known under the names of decency and indecency, concur in proving that we have an innate intuitive perception that there is something degrading in the sensual part of our nature, something to which a feeling of shame is naturally attached, something that jars with our conception of perfect purity, something we could not with any propriety ascribe to an all-holy being. It may be questioned whether any one was ever altogether destitute of this perception."¹⁴ According, then, to rationalistic testimony, not to repeat the numerous instances of the inspired writers of the Old and New Testaments, and according to the unanimous voice of all Catholic theologians, there is in man an innate, inborn, universal shame of impurity. Whence has this come, if not from the hand of God? As reason is the distinguishing mark of man, so shame of impure actions distinguishes him from the brute. For the

¹³ Peter Lombard, Sent. II-24.

¹⁴ Lecky, "History of European Morals," vol. i. p. 104.

brute, not having reason, is devoid of shame, and follows his instincts. Now, the impure man lowers himself to the level of the brute, and imitates him in his instincts; he would be in honor had he allowed his God-given reason to rule, but he prefers to follow the brute and becomes like unto him. Truly does the Psalmist say: "Man when he was in honor did not understand; he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them."¹⁵

Pride, spiritual pride, is a deadly sin which was first committed by Lucifer—the light-bearer before the throne of God in heaven; avarice is the sin committed by men for the sake of worldly possessions; impurity is the sin committed by man as a beast. By it a Christian, baptized, sanctified by the Holy Ghost in confirmation, and united to Jesus Christ by the reception of His body and blood in holy Communion, makes himself an unclean beast; he becomes nauseated of the table of the Lord, fills himself up and is saturated with the dregs of the impure sewers of hell. This is the vice that brings the blush of shame to the face of our holy mother the Church, that befouls her spotless robe of sanctity. The very name of the libertine is an abomination to her, for she is a "glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing,"¹⁶ and yet she has to bear the disgrace of the impurity of many of her children.

Impurity is as rampant today as ever it was; some look upon it as no sin at all. For having denied God and His law, they become either agnostics or pantheists or materialists, and assert that there is at bottom no difference between man and the brute. Or, again, if they have some notions of God and of their responsibility to Him, they look upon this sin as an amiable weakness, a thing to be condoned rather than condemned; and this frightful point of view obtains

¹⁵ Ps. xlviii. 13.

¹⁶ Ephes. v. 27.

even with some Catholics, who are a disgrace to the Church. Some imagine that God Himself looks at impurity from this point of view as it were through a veil; that He does not really mean what He says in condemnation of it, and that, after all is said, He easily forgives this so-called human weakness. What folly! The idea that God does not mean what He says is something that Lucifer and all the devils in hell know better than anybody else; the idea that God winks, as it were, at impurity is the summit of blasphemy, as if the all-holy and infinite Purity could connive at the sin so opposed to Himself!

There are many people who regard it as more degrading to do some rather dishonorable action, that is, dishonorable in the eyes of the world, than to be secretly a libertine. To lie, no doubt, is dishonorable, but it has no comparison with the crime of impurity: the world with its false standards frowns upon the one, but condones the other. No honorable man will lie, at least to be found out, but some very would-be honorable men are impure and libertines; that, says the world, is their private affair. That this is no declamatory exaggeration of the pulpit, or extreme fastidiousness of the ascetic, any one who has eyes to see and ears to hear knows very well. The world looks upon impurity when it is gilded, the world looks upon this vice when it is "respectable," and carried on in a so-called discreet way, as something not to be mentioned above a whisper in polite society, or to be hushed up as soon as possible if it becomes too notorious, or disreputable to its members.

As Cardinal Newman very ably says: "The world believes in the world's ends as the greatest of goods; it wishes society to be governed simply and entirely for the sake of this world. . . . What does it know of hell? It disbelieves it; it spits upon it; it abominates, it curses its very name and notion. Next, as to

the devil, it does not believe in him either. We next come to the flesh, and it is 'free to confess' that it does not think there is any great harm in following the instincts of that nature which, perhaps it goes on to say, God has given. How could it be otherwise? Who ever heard of the world fighting against the flesh and the devil?"¹⁷

The Church is wholly opposed to all this. She holds that nothing can make impurity respectable; that nothing can wash out its foul stain except the blood of Christ poured out on the soul through repentance. She teaches that what the world considers as polite, or urbane, or respectable, when it covers this foul sin, is simply the veneer of hell, and that all thoughts, desires, and actions of impurity, fully and deliberately consented to, are deadly, mortal sins, and render their perpetrators liable to eternal punishment in hell: this is her doctrine—this is her challenge to an adulterous, lascivious, and licentious world.

Oh, if the world would only heed the voice of the Church, how different things would be! But from the days of Adam this vice has lasciviously danced down the ages: and the Deluge came upon it, and the fire on Sodom and Gomorrha, and yet it started up again!

And then we have the lascivious dances, and insidious music, the foul gestures of the ancient Babylonians and Persians; the horrible orgies of those who peopled the land before it came into the possession of the Jewish people; the impurity of the Greeks and Romans, accompanied by religious rites, back to the Flood and all—all mounting up to heaven in a frightful pyramid of crime. And although the Church is in the world, yet the world heeds not her voice, and the dance of death continues, and the laughter of immodest suggestion peals out, and the impure dance their dance

¹⁷ "Anglican Difficulties," p. 206.

past the cross of the crucified, thorn-crowned Christ into the abyss beyond!

That this strong passion in man be restrained and directed according to reason, the Lord God has given by revelation positive commands. By the sixth and ninth commandments He has been pleased to secure the welfare of society by safeguarding the purity of the family, which is the basis of society. And so He has forbidden, under the most severe penalties, all impure actions as well as all impure thoughts and desires.

It is certain that the state of virginity is superior to that of marriage, but not all are called to that exalted state, and no one is obligated to it for life. However, all persons, married and single, are strictly obliged by God's law to lead lives of purity; no one is exempt from this law, no one can get any dispensation from it; it binds always and everywhere. According to St. Thomas of Aquin, "virginity is that virtue by which a person abstains from all carnal pleasures,"¹⁸ but, our Saviour says: "All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given. He that can take, let him take it."¹⁹

The greater number of men and women seek marriage, and under the Christian Dispensation this contract, which is at the same time a Sacrament, is the means ordained by Almighty God for the legitimate propagation of the human race and for the alleviation of concupiscence. Married persons are not virgins, but nevertheless all married persons are pure if they observe the law of God governing their state of life—for impurity is the abuse and not the use of marriage. Ringing down the ages, clearly, insistently, and persistently is the command of God: "Thou shalt not commit adultery,"²⁰ and by this command

¹⁸ 2—2, q. 152.

¹⁹ Matt. xix. 11, 12.

²⁰ Exod. xx. 14.

is understood all manner of carnal sin whatsoever.

The Holy Scriptures reduce all carnal sins to five different kinds or species: namely, adultery, fornication, sacrilege, incest, and sins against nature. These different kinds of sin may be so changed or aggravated by certain circumstances that these have also to be mentioned in confession. Adultery is a sin where one or both of the parties are married. If both are married, the sin is worse, for it is double adultery. In either case, this is a very grave crime, much more so than if the parties are single, for it is a sin not only against purity, but against justice and fidelity. It is against justice, for it injures the right of the husband or wife; it is against fidelity, for it breaks the solemn promise made at marriage. Holy Job, speaking of this crime, says: "This is a heinous crime, and a most grievous iniquity. It is a fire that devoureth even to destruction, and rooteth up all things that spring." ²¹ It makes no difference whether the married parties are living together or not, or for what reason they are separated; neither can indulge in unlawful lust with another person. "Many, by admiring the beauty of another man's wife, have become reprobate; for her conversation burneth as fire. Sit not at all with another man's wife, nor repose upon the bed with her: And strive not with her over wine, lest thy heart decline towards her and by thy blood thou fall into destruction." ²²

Although the infidelity and injustice are equal in both man and woman when this sin is committed, yet St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and St. John Chrysostom very plainly say that this crime is more culpable in the man than in the woman. First, because men are the heads and leaders, especially in their families, and ought not to do that which they would be shocked at in their own wives; again, the man is the stronger

²¹ Job xxxi. 11, 12.

²² Eccclus. ix. 11-13.

sex, and is therefore bound to resist temptations more manfully, conquer his passions, be more sensible of the crime of adultery, and avoid it in every way; and lastly, he ought to be ashamed of being outdone in this virtue by the wife whom he regards as weaker than himself.

“At the present day, although the standard of morals is far higher than in pagan Rome, it may be questioned whether the inequality of the censure which is bestowed upon the two sexes is not as great as in the days of paganism, and that inequality is continually the cause of the most pitiable injustice.”²³

This statement of a prominent non-Catholic writer is perfectly true, not only as regards some members of the Catholic Church, but especially of those outside her pale. The sin of the man is overlooked, is condoned; he may not lose his status in society, in fact he may be sought after, in the so-called upper classes, and may have a freer *entrée* into its most secret coteries. But let the woman be found out, and what is the unfair judgment of a malicious, jealous, and cruel world? It points the finger of scorn, it tries to degrade the woman, it gathers up its pharisaical skirts lest it may be contaminated, and passes by with a supercilious smile of contempt and consciousness of superior virtue. Yet it is “a fundamental truth that the same act can never be at once venial for a man to demand and infamous for a woman to accord.”²⁴ No, it never can be, and the sin is really much greater in the man than in the woman, notwithstanding the judgment of the world.

Fornication is a sin when both the man and the woman are single, or unmarried, and it is, without any doubt, always a mortal sin; but it is not as grave as

²³ Lecky, “History of European Morals,” vol. ii. p. 346, 347.

²⁴ Lecky, *ibid*, p. 347.

adultery, for the reasons already given. As has been said before in this discourse, St. Paul singles it out as not only not to be done, but as not to be even mentioned, and he says that those who do it "shall not obtain the kingdom of God." In the Book of Ecclesiasticus this is written: "Give not the power of thy soul to a woman, lest she enter upon thy strength, and thou be confounded; look not upon a woman that hath a mind for many: lest thou fall into her snares."²⁵ And this wonderful advice given by the great preacher of the Old Testament to the man is just as applicable to the woman.

Fornication becomes much graver when the crime of rape or of ravishment is added. Ravishment is the sin committed with a single woman, when she is oppressed and overcome by fraud, threats, or deceit, against her will. Rape, on the other hand, is violence brought to bear against the person, or against those under whose care that person is, for the purpose of satisfying lust, or even of contracting marriage. Both ravishment and rape constitute a special sin, and have to be confessed as such, because they gravely affect justice.

The sin of sacrilege is the violation by impurity of a person or of a place or of something consecrated to God; and the heinousness of the sin is in the abuse of what is sacred and devoted to Him. This so changes the nature of the sin that it must be expressed in the Sacrament of Penance. "I am the Lord your God: Be holy, because I am holy."²⁶

The sin of incest is carnal relationship with kindred by blood or marriage in those grades that are prohibited by the Church to marry, and the nearer the relationship the worse the crime. There is no doubt that this sin differs very much from other sins of impurity, for it is gravely repugnant to the natural

²⁵ Ecclus. ix. 2, 3.

²⁶ Lev. xi. 44.

reverence due to parents as well as to those who are bound together by the nearness of blood, or of marriage ties; consequently it must be mentioned in confession, as changing the nature of the sin.

Then there is the secret or solitary sin, probably the most practised of all the sins of impurity, namely, the horrible abuse of self. Those who do it are fast binding themselves with a cable that no power, short of the infinite power of God, can break. It is begun sometimes at a very early age, keeps on increasing through life, until those who practise it sink into an imbecile's grave, or drag out a miserable existence of idiocy. This particular form of impurity is never satisfied, and the means of satisfaction are always easy and secret; it feeds upon its own appetite, and that appetite is voracious. Young men and women, yes, old men and women, beware lest this monster grasp you in its terrible claws; this act is known to have been committed by persons a very short time before their death. This secret sin is a crime against nature, and is therefore a horrible crime.

There are other frightful crimes of impurity which are so perverse that it is not necessary to mention them, because in even doing so modesty might be offended. However, I may say that there are people in the world now who are as impure and as bestial as in the very worst times of pagan Rome: the orgies and saturnalia of crime may not be altogether so public as in the days of Pompeii and Baiae, but they are nevertheless as prevalent. It is only the public spirit of Christianity that prevents the recurrence of the former days, and even that barely suppresses the openness of the evil.

Listen to St. Paul. He is speaking to the Romans of his time, and his words describe our own. The Romans abandoned God, and worshipped the creature, just as modern society is doing, and this is what he

says was their punishment: "For this cause God delivered them up to shameful affections. For their women have changed the natural use into that use which is against nature. And, in like manner, the men also, having the natural use of the women, have burned in their lusts one towards another, men with men working that which is filthy, and receiving in themselves the recompense which was due to their error. And as they liked not to have God in their knowledge, God delivered them up to a reprobate sense to do those things which are not convenient."²⁷ Is not this an apt description of these very days? Look around you and see: behold the condition of modern society: it has no God but Venus and Bacchus, and their deformed son Priapus.

True, this impurity is veiled and venerated, as I have already said, but it is prevalent, and held down only by police regulations, which never can conquer it, and sometimes even wink at it. It is protected by men who are esteemed as models of society. It has its places as well known to its votaries as the parish church is known to the parishioners, and its patrons flock thither with as much assurance and with more boldness than the people assemble for Mass. "Birds of a feather will gather together,"²⁸ and so vice has its signs, and pass-words, and secret societies; it has its promoters, panderers, and procurers who ply their infamous trade, and become rich and respectable members of a decadent society. It flaunts itself in the suggestive, immodest dress of the women, by which it makes its appeal to the lower sexual appetite of men. Look around you and you will see that this appeal is made everywhere, and by women who ought to know better, and ought to be leaders for the betterment and the moral up-lift of society. Mothers allow

²⁷ Rom. i. 26-28.

²⁸ Burton, "Anatomy of Melancholy," pt. 3.

their daughters to dress in a very unbecoming manner and they themselves set the example by their own manner of dress. God alone knows the number of sins committed by reason of the suggestiveness of women's dress, for suggestiveness is the most powerful and deadly of temptations. "Turn away thy face from a woman dressed up, and gaze not upon another's beauty," is the advice of the great preacher of the Old Testament.²⁹

This manner or mode of dress becomes so much the worse when it is joined with the lascivious dances that are now indulged in by a great many people. To attempt a description of these orgiastic dances would surely offend the ears of any Christian, but judging from some accounts given of them, they are a recrudescence of the worst saturnalia of pagan Greece and Rome: the lights, half-toned or semi-dark or brilliant, the seductive music, the scantily-dressed, be-painted, and be-powdered women, the wine suppers, and all the surroundings are thoroughly calculated to inflame the sexual passion of those who participate. Again we hear the voice of the Old Testament preacher ringing true and clear: "Use not much the company of her that is a dancer, and hearken not to her, lest thou perish by the force of her charms."³⁰

Another source of sin is promiscuous company-keeping, and to this prolific source can be traced many impure sins. How many homes have been ruined, how many lives have been wrecked, by too much familiarity between young persons of different sex? God alone can give the answer. Do not imagine that those who have suave manners, a pleasing address, and are well-groomed are fit companions, and would make good husbands or wives, for underneath all this may lurk an evil heart and a lascivious mind. Beginning with apparently innocent things, a habit may be soon

²⁹ Ecclus. ix. 8.

³⁰ Ecclus. ix. 4.

formed of disregarding very improper and sinful advances, and it is then the beginning of the end.

What a Roman pagan says is very pertinent to this matter. "Resist beginnings, it is too late to employ medicine when the evil has grown strong by inveterate habit."³¹ And the pagan philosopher Cicero writes: "Every evil in the bud is easily crushed; as it grows older it becomes stronger." And the inspired preacher of the Old Testament says: "He that loveth danger shall perish in it."³² Beware, beware of unknown, and untrustworthy persons who infest the streets, the public places, and who strive to insinuate themselves into decent homes. In the United States it is reported that thousands of girls are lost sight of yearly, by their own carelessness or that of parents, and are either killed or are living a wretched life among the castaways of society in dens of infamy, the victims of man's lust and of their own imprudence and love of danger.

Then the theatre and the moving pictures are prolific sources of impurity, not to speak of many other evils, for they pander in many cases to perverted sexual passion. By living actors, who appeal to the eye and to the ear, things which ought not to be spoken of in decent society are held up for approbation and even for imitation. Divorce, infidelity to the marriage contract, and degraded sexual gratification are shown forth, or suggested, as the only noble things in life. Soul mates, which is a euphemistic name for the lecherous, are applauded, while faithful husbands and wives are travestied as fools; marriage is looked upon as an idle, transient ceremony, and as the relic of an out-worn superstition, while the bond it imposes is regarded as the greatest slavery. Nowadays, the theatre and the moving pictures have degenerated so much that a decent man dare not go to any of them,

³¹ Ovid.

³² Ecclus. iii. 27.

much less bring his wife and children; no one knows what kind of acting will take place, or what will be shown upon the screen.

Bad literature is an insidious source of impurity of soul, and this kind of literature is to be found at every turn one takes. It is in the sex novel, the would-be philosophical diagnosis of and appeal to the sexual passion; it is in the sugar-coated pill, as it were, of suggestion, more than in the direct statement. It is hidden sometimes under a beautiful style of language, but the poison is conveyed surely though secretly. In these novels, these stories, these magazines, the danger lies more in what is subtly hinted at than in what is directly said.

Before finishing this part of the sermon, I consider I would not be doing my duty if I did not draw your attention to the prevalent and odious vice of Onan, or what has been aptly called race suicide. This crime consists in the prevention of conception, and is wholly opposed to the very law of nature. The Old Testament calls it a "detestable thing," and God made an example for all time of its first recorded perpetrator by striking him dead. Under no consideration, and for no excuse, is it allowable to frustrate this law, and the Church has no power of dispensation, because it is founded upon the law of nature and the positive law of God. This is the great evil of modern times; it has its magazines, its literature, its societies, its propaganda, so much so that its methods and its evil devices are in the hands of even our growing school-girls. Were its precepts to be followed it would turn the human race back to the barn-yard and to the cattle pen; it would make beasts of men and utterly degrade women to the level of mere breeders of animals. Some women are willing to be such; some have fallen so low that for convenience, for appearance in society, and in order not to be hampered in

any way, especially in the continuance of lust, they forego the great joy and honor of motherhood. The punishment, even in this life, is barrenness, an empty cradle, the misery and loneliness of a childless old age, and a grave beside which only strangers stand. Surely:

“The bearing and the training of a child
Is woman’s wisdom.”³³

All these sins can be avoided if persons will observe the other command given by God to safe-guard purity in actions: namely “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife.”³⁴ All sin is at bottom a deflection or turning away of the will from God; all sin is first a sin of thought, and an action may or may not follow. But if the will fully turns away from God in a grave matter, there is no doubt that a mortal sin is committed.

Cardinal Newman, speaking of what the Church teaches to be a sin, says: “She considers that in a moment, with eyes shut and arms folded, a man may cut himself off from the Almighty by a deliberate act of the will, and cast himself into perdition.”³⁵ When God gave the commandment prohibiting all consent to thoughts, He intended to cut off the evil at its root; and our divine Saviour proves this by saying: “From the heart come forth evil thoughts . . . adulteries . . . fornications. . . . These are the things that defile a man.”³⁶ Therefore all thoughts of impurity that are fully and deliberately consented to are of the same nature and malice as if they were performed in action; that is to say: desires of adultery are of the same nature as the action itself, and the same is to be said of fornication, as well as of all other different kinds

³³ Tennyson, “The Princess,”
V. L. 456.

³⁴ Exod. xx. 17.

³⁵ “Anglican Difficulties,” p.
208.

³⁶ Matt. xv. 19, 20.

of impurity, for the sin is already committed in the mind. Wherefore in confession the number of times, and the different kinds of desires must be confessed, for, as is written in the Book of Wisdom, "inquisition shall be made into the thoughts of the ungodly."³⁷ And not only are impure thoughts to be repressed and driven from the mind, but also all impure speech is to be kept from the tongue. Our Saviour says: "Every tree is known by its fruit, for men do not gather figs from thorns: nor from a bramble bush do they gather the grape. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil. For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."³⁸

A foul-mouthed man is an abomination, for as the physician looks at the tongue to know the condition of the stomach, so any one can determine the foulness of the soul from the slime of the speech. St. Paul thus exhorts the Ephesians: "Fornication, and all uncleanness, let it not be so much as named among you, as becometh saints: or obscenity, or foolish talking, or scurrility, which is to no purpose."³⁹ God alone knows the evils brought about by the foul tongues of lecherous, impure men and women. The punishment even in this life of indulgence in this terrible vice is blindness of soul. The intellect that should know God, the intellect that was created by Him for that purpose, the intellect that raises man above the brute, and whose highest function is to know God, knows Him not: it is blind, and impurity has blinded it as blind as a bat in the full glare of the noon-day sun. If the saying of David: "The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God,"⁴⁰ be true, how much

³⁷ Wis. i. 9.

³⁸ Luke vi. 44, 45.

³⁹ Ephes. v. 3, 4.

⁴⁰ Ps. xiii. 1.

more truly can that statement be applied to the fool of impurity?

Blindness of soul brought about by impurity is a terrible punishment of God whereby the person falls from abyss to abyss, lives like a beast and dies like one. Linked up with this blindness is a callousness or hardness of heart. The heart that should be open to receive God's grace, as the thirsty ground drinks in the refreshing rain, is hardened and calloused by repeated thoughts, speech, and acts of impurity. Nothing hardens the heart like this vice.

Impurity continually indulged in renders the will weak, it enervates it, takes away from it all power of resistance, so that it becomes like a child in the hands of a giant. There are some so weak in this matter by repeated acts, that the moment a temptation or an object presents itself they immediately succumb; in fact, the lives of such persons are steeped in impurity. This did not come about suddenly, this was not brought on in a day; it was induced by repeated acts, so that habit became a second nature: the impure "drinketh iniquity like water."⁴¹ Think of and measure all the heartburnings, the sorrows, the disgrace that impurity brings upon society and the family.

Look around and see how divorce from the marriage-bond is gnawing at the very vitals of society, and sapping the foundations of its life: for divorce with so-called re-marriage is nothing but adultery. The bond of marriage cannot be severed except by death, or in only one case given by St. Paul, of which the Church alone is the final judge. "There are two ends which a moralist, in dealing with this question [of sexual passion] will especially regard—the natural duty of every man doing something for the support of the child he has called into existence,

⁴¹ Job xv. 16.

and the preservation of the domestic circle unassailed and unpolluted. The family is the center and the archetype of the state, and the happiness and goodness of society are always in a very great degree dependent upon the purity of domestic life. The essentially exclusive nature of marital affection, and the natural desire of every man to be certain of the paternity of the child he supports, render the incursions of irregular passions within the domestic circle a cause of extreme suffering. Under these circumstances, there has arisen in society a figure which is certainly the most mournful, and in some respects the most terrible, upon which the eye of the moralist can dwell. That unhappy being whose very name is a shame to speak: who counterfeits with a cold heart the transports of affection and submits herself as a passive instrument of lust: who is scorned and insulted as the vilest of her sex, and doomed, for the most part, to disease and abject wretchedness and an early death, appears in every age as the perpetual symbol of the degradation and the sinfulness of man.”⁴²

And what shall be said of bodily ruin by horrible disease on account of sexual excesses? It is a plague more terrible than any other of which we know, highly contagious, and liable to be passed on to the third and fourth generation. It is extremely prevalent, not only among the so-called lower, but much more among the so-called upper classes of society: surely God has cursed impurity even in this world. Do not for a moment imagine that this passion is the natural tendency of human love for another. Ah, no! the impure are selfish; the love of another has no place in their minds, they look only to their own gratification.

Marriage whose only object is lust cannot last when the object loses its power of sensual pleasure; marriage whose objective is love founded on the love of

⁴² Lecky, “History of European Morals,” vol. ii. p. 282.

God lasts always. It was the human love of women that dragged down Solomon, the wisest of men, into idolatry, or at least its patronage and building of temples for its exercise; it was human love of women that deprived Samson of his giant strength, and made him as weak as a babe in the hands of his mocking enemies; it was human love of women that made David an adulterer and a murderer. The fall of these great men ought to be a warning to all: for where giants are overcome it is madness for pigmies to contend. To the pure all things are pure: to the impure all things are impure; for, as St. Augustine beautifully says: "A pure heart is a single heart: and just as this earthly light cannot be seen unless with eyes that are pure: so neither is God seen, unless that is pure by which He is seen."⁴³

The pure man sees God in all His works, the impure man would fain deny Him, and his vision is that of the beast which perishes. The pure man thinks others are pure; the impure man thinks others are impure, for the outside world is reflected within. Our Saviour says: "The kingdom of God is within you."⁴⁴ The same can be said of the kingdom of the devil, for God reigns in the heart of the pure, the devil in that of the impure. Be careful, be humble before God, keep away from the occasions of impurity, repress immediately all impure thoughts and desires. No one can be pure unless God helps, for without His aid we are perfectly helpless before the tempest of a violent temptation. One impure thought or act consented to will disturb your soul as a stone thrown into a tranquil lake disturbs the whole body of water. Pray for purity to the three holiest persons that ever lived on earth: Jesus, the essentially holy God; Mary, His immaculate Mother; Joseph, the chaste foster-

⁴³ Sermon on the Mount,
Book I. ch. 2.

⁴⁴ Luke xvii. 21.

father of God's Son and the husband of His Mother—that they may guard you during life and keep you from the snares of the impure devil. “Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.”⁴⁵ Amen.

⁴⁵ Matt. v. 8.

ON DRUNKENNESS

“Let us walk honestly as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness. . . . But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences.” (Rom. xiii. 13, 14.)

SYNOPSIS

What is man?—The soul of man.—God created man.—Intelligence and free-will.—Drunkenness one of the worst sins.—Glossing it over.—The destruction brought by drunkenness.—The beginning of drunkenness.—Easy to contract the habit.—Effects of drunkenness.—The moral evil of drink.—The devil’s appeal against the drunkard.—The habit of drinking.—Delirium tremens.—Drunkenness and the home.—A drunken mother.—Effects of drunkenness on society.—Drunkenness the parent of other crimes.—Drunkenness no respecter of persons.—Nursing mothers who drink to excess.—Drunkenness is a mortal sin.—Liquor not bad in itself.—Its abuse.—The liquor traffic and legislation.—Temperance.—Religion and drunkenness.—Final appeal.

MAN is the mirror of the universe. In him are reflected all the beauties of the material and the spiritual world. He is a wonderful composite of the animal and of the spirit. His physical part, with all its nerves and tissues and fibres, has not yet been wholly explored by physicians and anatomists.

The hand, that can be trained to the most delicate sense of touch; the eye, upon whose retina are photographed objects thousands and thousands of times larger than itself, and at an immense distance; the ear, which can catch the most exquisite and most difficult of musical sounds; the sense of smell, which can detect the most subtle odors; speech, which externalizes the most refined thoughts—all these are senses created

by the Almighty for a definite end and purpose.

The senses man has in common with the brute creation; indeed, some brutes far excel him in the exercise of some of the senses. What is it that makes man the lord and chief of creation? What is it that raises him above the brute? What is it that makes him what he is—a man? The answer is, it is his reasoning soul.

In Holy Writ it is said that Almighty God in the beginning created all other creatures by his fiat. Out from the Eternal came the words “Fiat lux,” “Be light made, and light was made.”¹ Then there sprung into existence the glorious sun in his noon-day splendor; the moon reflecting his golden glory shone in the silver of her borrowed radiance; the stars were thrown across the field of heaven like glittering gems from the hand of the Creator.

At His word order came out from chaos. The sea, separated from the land, teemed with life; the land, with all its beautiful diversity of hill and dale, mountain and valley, was filled with living creatures, and produced the choicest fruits and most fragrant flowers; most varied-plumaged birds filled the air with song, and in the evening nestled in the branches of the lofty trees.

God looked upon all this and declared it to be good. But there was one thing wanting to complete this grand and magnificent work, and that one thing was—man. God in Trinity took counsel with Himself how He should crown all His works. “Let us make man to Our image and likeness: and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth. And God created man to His own image.”²

Behold Adam as he opens his eyes to the light of day with all the glory of God’s creation around him.

¹ Gen. i. 3.

² Gen. i. 26, 27.

He is the masterpiece of God's work—the crown of God's creation. He is the link that unites the material to the spiritual. His body contains in itself the materials of all the substances that God has created. His soul, endowed with intelligence and free will, has indelibly stamped upon it the image and likeness of God. It came from the breath of God in time, and it will live for all eternity. "And the Lord God formed man from the slime of the earth: and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul."³

Now, our souls, like the soul of the first man, come from the hands of God. They are created to know Him and to love Him in this world, and are destined for an eternity of happiness in the world or the life to come. Each soul is endowed with intelligence and free will, and each soul is sealed with the image of its Creator.

There is no sin that breaks this union between the Creator and the creature—there is nothing so dethrones the reason and destroys the free will of man—there is nothing so defaces and disfigures the image of God stamped upon the soul as the sin of gluttony in the excessive use of intoxicating liquor. All other sins leave man in the possession of his reason and of his free will; no matter how he may fall by the commission of other crimes, he yet has the power to reason and the will to act.

The drunkard falls far lower than the brute by drowning his reason and will in intoxicating liquor; the brute has instincts by which he is guided, man is ruled by intelligence and directed by his free will.

And yet some poets and dramatists have used their talents to gloss over and cover up this terrible and wide-spread evil, that is gnawing at the very vitals of society. On the other hand, Shakespeare, the prince

³ Gen. ii. 7.

of dramatists, exclaims: "O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil." ⁴

Yes, the demon of drunkenness is stalking through the land, destroying thousands of lives, wrecking thousands of homes, and blackening thousands of reputations. Other demons hide themselves from the light of day, but this monster grows bolder and more public in proportion to the number of victims he daily devours. He alone can lift up his head, and as far as he can, defy the Almighty. He alone can insult Him as the author not only of grace, but also of nature. He not only wrecks the soul of man by destroying his reason, but he ruins the body, and lowers the whole man to the condition of the brute. "O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains, that we should, with joy, pleasure, revel, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts." ⁵ The person who drinks to excess intoxicating liquor is daily shortening his existence, rendering life a misery to himself and to others, and exposing himself to the danger of eternal damnation.

"Stones are hollowed out by the constant dropping of water." ⁶ This old saying is nowhere more clearly verified than in the case of the drunkard. Day by day, drop by drop, he is wearing away his life. The eye that should be clear is bleared and dim; the face is generally flushed; the tongue is coated; the hand is shaky; the gait is unsteady; the brain is afire. How many of these examples do we not see daily around us, lamentable victims of the devil of gluttony and drunkenness!

Some young man whom we knew, just coming into the prime of manhood, the demon of drink laid hands

⁴ "Othello," Act II., Scene 3.

⁵ "Othello," Act II., Scene 3.

⁶ Ovid.

on and wrecked his life. In an evil moment he went with bad companions, who encouraged him to drink; they laughed at his fears and at his conscience. He had never in his life tasted strong liquor, and under the pressure of their ridicule he drinks the first fatal draught, and immediately he is changed. It is true that he still has the full use of his reason and of his free will, but there is a change, a subtle change: he has yielded, and has lost somewhat of his power of future resistance.

The devil is very wary and cautious: scarcely ever does he tempt a man to commit a great crime at once. He leads him on by degrees, and this is especially true of the demon of drink. "No one ever became very wicked at once."⁷ Watch this man of whom I have spoken. He goes again with the same companions; he drinks again and more than before; he feels the effect more; his speech becomes affected; his brain is affected: his thoughts are not the same as before he drank—and he is now under the influence of liquor.

True it is that he is not drunk yet; he has the use of reason, but that use is very much weakened. He goes home, and his parents and brothers and sisters are pained and grieved to see him in such a condition. Indeed, he is not so far gone as not to be ashamed of himself, and makes a resolution that he will never be found in such a condition again. But he goes back to the same companions, he places himself in the same danger; the lure of drink is upon him, and his resolutions vanish like smoke in a gale. The drunkard's devil is fastening his tentacles around him like an octopus; slowly, slowly, but surely, he is becoming enveloped in his coils, until finally he is completely surrounded—and then we have the drunkard.

"The descent into hell is easy, but to recall your steps and re-ascend to the upper air, this is labor,

⁷ Juvenal.

this is work.”⁸ This saying of the Roman pagan poet is as true today as when he first uttered it two thousand years ago, and it is especially true of the drunkard.

It is easy to get into the habit of gluttony in drink; it is very easy to go on the downward grade, but it is very hard, very difficult, to give up the habit, and very laborious to climb the hill again. Our divine Saviour says: “Take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcome with surfeiting and drunkenness.”⁹ And in the inspired Book of Proverbs it is written: “Be not in the feasts of great drinkers, nor in their revellings. . . . Because they that give themselves to drinking, and that club together shall be consumed: and drowsiness shall be clothed with rags. Look not upon the wine when it is yellow, when the color thereof shineth in the glass: it goeth in pleasantly. But in the end, it will bite like a snake, and will spread abroad poison like a basilisk.”¹⁰

Consider the terrible condition of body and soul to which the drunkard reduces himself. Remember what I said in the beginning of this sermon, that the human body is the noblest and greatest of God’s material universe, and that man’s soul comes directly from the hands of God. St. Paul says: “Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God: and you are not your own?”¹¹ The drunkard makes his body the home of the devil, who wrecks that home by the poison of alcohol. This poison mixes with his blood, and often breaks out in unsightly blotches on his face; it ruins his stomach, destroys his health, and breaks down his whole nervous system, bringing on premature death and a drunkard’s grave.

⁸ Aeneid.

⁹ Luke xxi. 34.

¹⁰ Prov. xxiii. 20, 21; 31, 32.

¹¹ I. Cor. vi. 19.

Then, again, he ruins his prospects in this life, not to speak now of the next. No one will employ him, for fear that when he is most needed he will be found incapable; he renders himself unfit for any position. Should he be an employer, his business will go to ruin in a short time; should he be among the employed he will be dismissed as unfit for work, for no one wants a drunkard. How many a sharp, shrewd business man is wrecked by drink! Had he attended to his business he would have amassed a fortune, which might be a benefit to himself and the community. But, little by little, by constantly tipping, by playing with the devil of drink, his business was neglected and became a burden to him. His friends advised him, admonished him, and warned him that he could not drink and attend to his business, but all to no purpose. One day the crash came; his usefulness has departed; his business has vanished; he is thrown on the world a beggar, maybe heavily involved in debt. The employee, the workman, who is addicted to drink is worse off still. Whatever money he may chance to earn he spends foolishly, what he should use for food and clothing to keep himself healthy and respectable-looking, he throws away recklessly for drink, until finally he becomes a tramp and a beggar. He could be a trusted man, he could be an honorable, upright man, a credit to himself and a pride to his employers; but now he is a tramp, and a beggar. "A workman that is a drunkard shall not be rich."¹² What I have mentioned are only a few of the physical evils attendant upon the gluttony of drink—only one phase of the horrible havoc wrought by it.

In the Book of Proverbs it is very truly said: "He that loveth good cheer, shall be in want: he that loveth wine, and fat things, shall not be rich."¹³ And what can I say of the moral evils? How can I adequately

¹² Ecclus. xix. 1.

¹³ Prov. xxi. 17.

convey to your minds the destruction and desolation caused by drink in the soul? I cannot portray fully or clearly the ruin in the soul of the drunkard, for to do this I would have to know fully and clearly the dignity of the human soul, the relationship it bears to God, and the crime of the mortal sin of drunkenness. This much, however, we all know, namely, that our souls are immortal; that it is by virtue of the soul's faculties that we are "a little less than the angels"¹⁴; that our souls are priceless in God's sight; that the eternal Son of God died to purchase and save each individual soul; that we are bought with a great price,¹⁵ and are bound to the God who bought us by a bond that neither earth nor hell can break—nothing except our own free will; that on our soul is stamped the image of Almighty God, who created us for Himself; that each one of us can truly echo the heartfelt cry of St. Augustine to God: "Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it repose in Thee."¹⁶

By the wonderful mystery of the Incarnation Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the adorable Trinity, became man, took upon Himself the vesture of our manhood, and in doing so deified our nature. Now consider the indignity that is offered to the human nature of Christ by the drunkard. He does not know what he is doing, for he has destroyed his reason. Oaths and blasphemies are upon his lips, his voice is raised in brawling, curses, and imprecations, his brain is afire, his nerves are on a terrible tension; he staggers; he reels; he falls; he is a heap of infamy. Behold this image of God as he lies there; the very dogs of the street are better off than he. Where is now the image of God in his soul? It is blotted out by drink. Where is his reason, where his free will?

¹⁴ Ps. viii. 6.

¹⁵ I. Cor. vi. 20.

¹⁶ Conf. Bk. I. No. 1.

They have fled. Where is even the human instinct of a man? It is gone. O God, all is gone, gone and utterly lost! For the time being he is dead to everything, to God and to his own existence. O eternal Father in heaven! far be it from me to say that this man is Thy image. No, he has made himself lower than the brute. The devil of drunkenness stands over his prostrate and conquered form like a gladiator, exultingly raises up his face to God and mockingly asks Him if this is the being created after His own image and likeness. O God Almighty! he cries, look down from Thy lofty throne. Here is a being that I have destroyed, that I have presently taken out of Thy power to save. Thou didst create him, Thou didst make him a man, Thou didst stamp Thy image on his soul. I have destroyed him, I have degraded him, I have blackened his soul. Where are now the fruits of the death and resurrection of Thy Son for this wretch? Where is the dignity of his manhood? He has degraded his body and defiled his soul. Strike him now, O God of heaven! He is incapable of making an act of contrition. Strike him, that I may drag him down with me into hell and quench his thirst with molten fire.

Such, without exaggeration, would be the language of the devil of drunkenness, standing triumphantly over this man, who is an object of exultation to hell and an object of horror to heaven.

If the devil reigns in the soul of any one who is in the state of deliberate mortal sin, he surely reigns supreme in the soul of the deliberately drunken man. In all other sins the sinner may cry for pardon from God, and obtain it—the robber, the impure, the murderer, if he know that the hand of death is about to be laid upon him, may in an instant cry out for mercy and pardon. But not so with the drunken man, for he cannot do so; he has deliberately deprived himself

of reason and free will: he has drowned his soul in the ocean of his own drink, and should he die in that condition, he reels, as it were, drunk into the awful presence of God! No wonder St. Paul says that "many walk, of whom I have told you often (and now tell you weeping), that they are enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction: whose God is their belly: and whose glory is their shame."¹⁷

Yes, indeed, the drunken glutton makes his god his belly, and glories in the shamefulness of it; he sells his happiness, his very life, and his soul for gluttony. The habit of repeated acts has become so strong that it is a second nature; he has created a disease for himself. His self-control is so destroyed that the moment drink is placed before him he rushes for it like a hungry dog for food. With eager eyes he takes the liquor in his unsteady hand, raises it to his parched lips, and drinks it down. The moment it is suddenly stopped his nerves are all unstrung, his mind is filled with apprehensive fears and visions, his imagination is inflamed by images of hell and its terrors. Sometimes he sees snakes crawling all over him, which he vainly endeavors to pick off and throw from him; other times the devil is hideously grinning in his face, and he recoils from him in horror. The fire of hell is burning in his brain and in his veins, his eyes are starting from their sockets, his mouth is foaming, and with the cry of a maniac he yields his soul into the hands of an outraged and angry God. His soul stands drunk, if I may use the expression, before the bar of divine justice in the court of God; he is sentenced by the Judge, and dragged down by the jailers with mocking laughter into the prison of hell. This is by no means a fanciful picture, this is not drawing on the imagination alone. This picture is as true as anything can be, and is but a feeble attempt to show the physical

¹⁷ Phil. iii. 18, 19.

and moral degradation of the drunkard and of his end.

“Who hath woe? whose father hath woe? who hath contentions? who falls into pits? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? Surely they that pass their time in wine, and study to drink off their cups,” says the wise man in the Book of Proverbs.¹⁸

But this vice does not stop here, for we see the devil of drunkenness entering the home, to wreck and destroy its purity and happiness. How can I picture to you the sweetness and serenity of the home? The poet has well said:

“’Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home.”¹⁹

In it there should be happiness, peace, and contentment; it may be poor, but cleanliness, purity, sobriety, authority, and love should reign there. It should be a haven of rest, and a place of safety for husband and wife and children. As again the poet says:

“Home is the resort
Of love, of joy, of peace, of plenty; where
Supporting and supported, polished friends
And dear relations mingle into bliss.”²⁰

The father going from home in the morning to his daily work should leave it with smiles upon his lips and blessings in his heart for his wife and children. He should return to it in the evening with gladness in his soul and on his countenance. His wife and children should long for his return, and be glad to meet him, and gather around him with joy. As he enters the threshold all outside cares should vanish, for he should find solace for his troubles and encouragement

¹⁸ Prov, xxiii. 29, 30.

¹⁹ Payne.

²⁰ Thomson, “The Seasons.—
Autumn.”

in his trials in the love of his wife and the obedience of his children. Surely, there is no place in this world like a happy, contented home; it is a foretaste of our home in heaven, because it is modelled on the holy home of Nazareth, where Jesus, Mary, and Joseph dwelt.

Now consider the opposite of all this, the home of the drunkard. What do we behold there? Nothing but misery, and sorrow, and poverty. As the drunkard staggers into his home, his wife and children are warned of his approach by his unsteady footsteps and his loud and boisterous voice. It may be that the first word as he enters is a curse, that his demonstrations of love are blows at his wife and children, who hide away from him affrighted, with pale cheeks and startled eyes. He curses and swears because things are not as he wishes; he gives scandal to his children and arouses the neighborhood, and like a dog sinks down growling into a drunken slumber.

Picture to yourselves the young girl at the altar as she vows her love and her life to such a man as this. Little did she think that this would be her wretched lot during life. In the beginning all went well, a life of happiness and of beautiful motherhood seemed to be before her. But little by little her husband begins to drink, and with the clear, unerring instincts of a woman and a wife she notices that, as time goes on, he is getting worse. She begs of him, she pleads with him, to give it up. But no, the devil of gluttony has his coils around him, and he is caught in their slimy folds. He is dismissed from work, and thrown out upon the world with a wife and family to provide for. Drunkenness has now so debased him that he loses all respect for himself and all care for them. He may be in rags, his wife and children may be in rags; he does not seem to care, for "his god is his belly and his glory is in his shame." He goes with others as

bad and as abandoned as himself, for "birds of a feather will gather together."²¹

The drunkard has been known to steal things from his own home, even the food from his wife and children, for liquor to satisfy his gluttony. There is no money, there is no food, there is no furniture; debts are accumulating so much that credit will no longer be given. Hunger is visiting, the wolf is at the door. There is no food for her who as a young girl pledged her vows at the altar to this miserable remnant of what he then was, and it wrings her heart the worst of all to hear her children ask for the food she cannot give them. There is no light, no heat, no comfort. In order to keep the home together, in order to keep herself and her children respectable, and give them food and a Christian education, she has now to begin all over again and go to work outside. Night after night he comes home as a tramp, and his bleared eye cannot see that the woman whom he swore to protect and love is daily growing weaker and weaker. The ordeal, the trouble, the daily grind of work and anxiety are becoming too much for her; disease brought on by overwork has laid hold upon her and is wearing her life away. He does not notice that the cheek that was ruddy and healthy once is growing worn and hollow, and the eye that was bright once has lost its luster, until finally he is brought up with a sudden shock: he comes home one night to find his wife dead. Now, if he has any will left, if he has the least spark of manhood in him he will reform, and take care of his saddened home and children. But no, he is so brutalized, he is so far gone, that he hardly realizes the fact of his wife's death. She is carried out to the grave-yard and buried: his children are scattered to be lost in the wickedness of the world; he goes along for some time, and ends in the drunkard's death.

²¹ Burton, "Anatomy of Melancholy."

O God of heaven, if this were but a pen picture, a fancy of my brain! But you know well that it is not; you see the reality around you every day. Surely, if a happy, temperate home is a foretaste of heaven, the drunkard's home is a foretaste of hell. Many an abandoned woman would not be on the streets of our cities, or living in houses of prostitution, a disgrace to her sex and a by-word to men, if she had not a drunken parent who drove her to a life of shame.

And what shall I say of the drunken mother, or what words can I use to show adequately what an abomination she is, what scandal she causes and how she ruins the home? It is written in the inspired book of Ecclesiasticus: "Happy is the husband of a good wife: for the number of his years is double. A virtuous woman rejoiceth her husband, and shall fulfil the years of his life in peace. A good wife is a good portion, she shall be given in the portion of them that fear God, to a man for his good deeds. A drunken woman is a great wrath: and her reproach and shame shall not be hid." ²² Oh! how our souls revolt, and, as it were, become nauseated at the spectacle of a drunken woman, of a drunken mother. Of all the blessings that God confers upon a man, one of the greatest is that of a good wife and of a good mother.

In the nuptial Mass the Church uses these words from the Psalms: "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine on the sides of thy house. Thy children as olive plants, round about the table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord." ²³ To her husband she is a helper and a consoler; to her children she is the embodiment of all that is good, and holy, and pure. Is there anything more loving than a loving wife, anything more holy than a good mother? How often is the blessing used by the Church turned

²² Eccclus. xxvi. 1-3, 11.

²³ Ps. cxxvii. 3, 4.

into a curse by a drunken woman! A drunken woman is a libel on human nature, a disgrace to her sex, and an unspeakable corruption.

Hitherto we have been considering the physical and moral effects of drunkenness upon the individual and in the family; let us see now its effects upon the state, or society in general.

As the family is made up of individuals, so the state or society is composed of families. As the goodness or badness of the family depends upon the observance of God's law by the individuals composing it, so the weal or woe of society depends upon the uprightness or the good morals of the family. The unit of society is the family; it is its basis: no state can exist without it.

Man is created by Almighty God as a social being; he has obligations and duties to his Maker and to himself, but none the less are his obligations and duties to his fellow man and to society. All laws, all codes, all society are based upon these two commandments of God: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is no other commandment greater than these."²⁴ Now it is perfectly evident that drunkenness breaks these two commandments, for it takes the love of God out of the soul of the individual, it ruins the neighbor—the nearest neighbor, which is the family—and it is the destruction of society.

Experience and history fully witness to the truth of this last statement. It is very true that not all persons in our reformatories and jails are there only on account of drunkenness, but it is just as true that a great percentage are there directly or indirectly on its account. To drunkenness can be traced a great deal

²⁴ Mark xii. 30, 31.

of crime of other kinds, "for wine hath destroyed very many,"²⁵ and "wine is a luxurious thing, and drunkenness riotous: whosoever is delighted therewith shall not be wise."²⁶ Brawls, quarrels, and even murders are the outcome of drunkenness; it drives the woman out upon the midnight streets, or compels her to hide her shame in the house of ill-fame; it brings on degradation, poverty, and beggary.

A great bulk of the expenses of the state goes to the support of asylums for the insane, orphanages, reformatories, jails, and police, all on account of the fearful plague of drunkenness. Millions of dollars are yearly spent to fill the maw and satisfy the stomach of this terrible Moloch. It is the parent of many other evils, especially of impurity. The very law of nature, not to speak of the law of Christ, demands of men sobriety and temperance. As far as he can the drunkard overturns the law of nature.

Society confers blessings and benefits upon all men, and all men in return should give an equivalent to society. Now, the drunkard is a burden to society; he is a loss instead of a gain; he is a rotten branch on the tree of society; he is a menace to the community, like a plague. What an immense advantage it would be to the country, to society in general, if all the money spent in drunkenness were turned into works of benevolence and charity, of public improvement and civic needs.

Even before the mild and gentle Saviour came to teach men temperance and self-abnegation, the pagans themselves decried drunkenness as an abomination. Cicero says: "A sensual and intemperate youth hands over a worn-out body to old age." And Seneca says: "Drunkenness is nothing but voluntary madness." It is said that the Spartans made their slaves drunk to teach their children a horror for this vice. This was

²⁵ Ecclus. xxxi. 30.

²⁶ Prov. xx. 1.

part of the training that has made the Spartan name a synonym for all that is severe, healthy, and strong.

Look at the earlier history of Rome. She became the mistress of the world. Her hardy, trained, sober soldiery conquered all the known portions of the world; they knew no fatigue and were ignorant of fear; her generals and statesmen were brave and clear-headed. And so Rome became one of the greatest and richest empires that the world has ever seen. Kings knelt at her feet, and princes graced her triumphs, and her name was a passport of esteem to all men. To Rome St. Paul appealed as to the highest civil tribunal, and all men had to hear and heed that final call. Rome, built up by the bravery, temperance, sobriety, and wisdom of her soldiers, generals, and statesmen, was humanly speaking unconquerable; it seemed as if no outside foes could destroy her matchless military and civil power. And yet Rome fell, she slew herself; no alien hand destroyed her—she drank herself to death. Rome, in the time of her ease and her wealth and splendor, became a drunken wanton, and fell.

As surely as this happened to Rome, so it will happen to any other country or state that allows the devil of drunkenness to rule it. No country can stand long whose citizens as a class are drunkards, for just as drink ruins the individual, and breaks up the home and family, so will it ruin the state.

The vice of drunkenness is no respecter of persons; it can live in the poorest lodging-house or the magnificently furnished hotel; it can be found in the cellar or the attic, as well as in the drawing-room or my lady's boudoir; it can be in the fashionable club-house, in the gilded gin-palace, and in the lowest houses of ill-fame. It will be where there are rags and filth, and where there are silks and satins and luxurious surroundings. It will equally live with the highest in the

social scale, as well as with the outcast of society. It will stupefy the brains of the slow-witted and will make the quick-witted insane. It will turn a genius into an idiot, and make a strong-willed man a babbling, crying fool. It will make grinning apes of the noblest men and women, or cause them to act like swine. It attacks everybody, the learned and unlearned, the rich and the poor. Its foundation may be laid in the sip of champagne, or the little beer or whiskey, that is taken at first merely for the sake of health, as is pretended. Some physicians tell us that drunkenness in after life can be traced to the desire generated in the very young by over-fond mothers who give them medicine and narcotics which are half alcohol, in order to assuage pain or keep them quiet.

Drunkenness has always been in the world, and it will always be there. God, in His inscrutable ways, allows it to be so. "For it must needs be that scandals come; but nevertheless woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh."²⁷ And again our Saviour says that on the last day all scandals shall be cast out. "For the Son of man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all scandals, and them that work iniquity."²⁸

And this horrible scandal of drunkenness is to be found as much, if not more, in what is called the upper class of society as in the lower. There is as much drunkenness among the wealthy as among the poor; it may be condoned or covered up, but it is there nevertheless, and is known well by all. The drunkenness of the millionaire is far worse than that of the mendicant; the drunkenness of the silk-clad, painted, and powdered would-be lady is far worse than that of the ragged, bedraggled woman of the streets. It is the sins of the so-called high society, especially drunken-

²⁷ Matt. xviii. 7.

²⁸ Matt. xiii. 41.

ness, that will have a terrible accounting of scandal on the last day.

It is the unanimous judgment of all theologians that drunkenness brought on deliberately is always a mortal sin. St. Paul warns us that "drunkards shall not possess the kingdom of God."²⁹ The early Fathers of the Church, St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, fought against this terrible evil. In the time of St. Augustine there was an heretical sect called the Manicheans who preached the essential evil of liquor itself, and the great saint directed against them the powerful battery of his learning and genius. Alcoholic liquor is not bad in itself: it is a creature of God, but it is its abuse that makes the sin, for man can abuse any good thing, as we well know.

Whiskey, wine, beer, or any intoxicating liquor is not bad in itself, it is man who, by abusing, renders it bad for himself. Everything that God made is good. He made the earth and the products thereof; our divine Saviour turned water into wine at the marriage-feast in Cana of Galilee.

The present condition of the drink evil, and the efforts made by civil legislation to abolish it, have been largely brought about by those engaged in its traffic. It was evident that something had to be done, but instead of its regulation, the opposite course was taken, and we now have constitutional prohibition. The pendulum has swung to the opposite extreme, and law in a great many cases has become a by-word. The evil has only become accentuated, and men and women now drink, and drink to excess, who never drank before: you cannot dragoon nor can you legislate people to observe God's law. It is only by the virtue of temperance that people can be kept sober, because "temperance is a moral virtue which regulates

²⁹ I. Cor. vi. 10.

the appetite according to right reason and the divine law." ³⁰

No right-minded person denies that the state has the power and the duty to regulate the traffic in liquor, and protect itself from the fearful ravages of drunkenness. But, on the other hand, no right-minded person can assert that the state can eliminate what is not bad in itself; use is one thing, abuse is another; it is the abuse that ought to be regulated. Nothing can so effectually regulate and destroy drunkenness as religion. The key of the situation is in the hands of the Church. She alone can apply a remedy by an appeal sanctioned by the law of God. Our would-be saviours of society, who depend upon and make the last court of conscience the police power of the state, should have found out by practical experience the utter futility of that power in a matter of conscience. No, nothing will stop drunkenness, as far as it is possible to stop it, but religion.

Before concluding, let me say that the constant tippler is always, more or less, under the influence of liquor; he is a veritable slave to it and imagines he cannot get along without it. The man whose boast is that he can take it or leave it generally never leaves it. No man, be he never so strong; no woman, be she never so virtuous, can afford to trifle with the devil of drunkenness. His experience covers the age of the human race, from the first man until now; he knows well how to play the game, and if any one plays with him he will surely lose. The cards are stacked; the dice are loaded, for the devil has always been a liar and a cheat. So beware, beware; you cannot be too cautious. Young man or young woman, your first drink may be your undoing, maybe your first step to disgrace here and maybe to hell hereafter.

O merciful Jesus, by Thy fearful thirst upon the

³⁰ Scavini, "Theologia Moralis," vol. iii. p. 168.

cross of shame, caused by the loss of Thy sacred blood, protect us from the evil of drunkenness, give us the grace to be temperate and sober here on earth, that we may merit to be inebriated for all eternity with the torrents of Thy infinite delights! Amen.

ON HUMAN RESPECT

“He that shall be ashamed of Me and of My words: of him the Son of man shall be ashamed, when He shall come in His majesty and that of His Father, and of the holy angels.” (Luke ix. 26.)

SYNOPSIS

Man is a social being.—Difference between man and the brute.—The law of charity.—Duty to God.—A subtle temptation of the devil.—What is human respect?—The threat of Christ.—No neutrality.—The far-reaching consequences of acts and speech.—Human respect responsible for many evils.—Liberty and slavery.—The coward.—St. Peter's example.—Human respect and divine prudence.—Is religion secret?—Ostentatious religion.—The world really despises the time-server.—Despise the judgment of the world.—Ingratitude of human respect.—The world is opposed to God.—The glory of being a good Christian.—An objection answered.—Pharisees.—The two standards.—The great white way.—The remedy for human respect.—Final appeal.

GOD made man a social being. He intended that he should act and be acted upon in every phase of life from the cradle to the grave. Hardly had the first man been made than “the Lord said: It is not good for man to be alone: let Us make him a help like unto himself,”¹ and God made Eve, the first woman, married her to our first parent, and thus we have the beginning of all family and social life.

No man is sufficient for himself, and by the very law of his nature he must perforce come into contact with his fellow beings in family, social, and religious life and activities; he is, as it were, tied to the human race and the human race is tied to him. A

¹ Gen. ii. 18.

divorce from the bond is impossible even in the lowest and most savage tribes, for the most untutored savage is as truly a man as the most cultured gentleman; between him and the brute there is a deep and wide abyss, which can never be bridged.

“If it could be proved that there are savages who are absolutely destitute of the progressive energy which distinguishes reason from instinct and of the moral aspiration which constitutes virtue, this would not prove that rational or moral qualities form no part of their nature. If it could be shown that there is a stage of barbarism in which man knows, feels, and does nothing that might not be known, felt, and done by an ape, this would not be sufficient to reduce him to the level of the brute. There would still be this broad distinction between them: the one possesses a capacity for development which the other does not possess. Under favorable circumstances the savage will become a reasoning, progressive, and moral man; under no circumstances can a similar transformation be effected in the ape. It may be as difficult to detect the oak-leaf in the acorn as in the stone; yet the acorn may be converted into an oak, the stone will always continue to be a stone.”²

But, besides this fundamental law of nature, there is the Christian law of charity, promulgated by our Lord to the whole world: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”³ By these two laws of nature and of grace the whole life of man, savage and Christian, is touched at all points.

By the law of charity men owe to one another respect, deference, and the observance of the golden rule laid down by Christ: “As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner.”⁴

² Lecky, “History of European Morals,” vol. i. p. 121.

³ Matt. xxii. 39.

⁴ Luke vi. 31.

But beyond and above all duties to our fellow-man, in any state or condition of life, is the duty we owe to God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment."⁵ This law is paramount; it binds always and everywhere; no one is dispensed from its obligation and observance.

Yet sad to say, the desire to please men and gain their applause, or the fear of being ridiculed or of incurring their displeasure, very often draws men away from the service which they owe to their Creator. This is one of the most far-reaching and subtle devices of the devil, and by means of it men have been wheedled, or frightened, or laughed away from the service of God, perhaps into eternal hell. This is the devil of human respect, and there is little doubt that he is one of the most powerful foes of man.

Human respect is that feeling by which a person is ashamed to be known as a good and practical Christian; it is the foolish and vain fear by which one is frightened from doing his duty according to the dictates of his own conscience, lest he be laughed at by others; it is the slavish and mean desire of pleasing others by which one sacrifices his conscience, speaks evil, and does evil things that he may not displease the world.

Now, such shame, fear, and worldly attempts to please are so contrary to the law of God and to the statement of Christ used as a text to this sermon, that no one can be deemed to practise Christianity if he is guided by such principles, and unless he changes he will never obtain the vision of God in heaven. It is only by bursting asunder the strong and terrible chains of human respect that one can be really free, for the

⁵ Matt. xxii. 37, 38.

one who is bound by them is more truly the slave of the devil and of the world than the meanest and most cruelly-bound slave of any human task-master.

St. Matthew gives us the very words containing the terrible threat of our Saviour regarding human respect. "Every one that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But he that shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven." ⁶

To trample under foot and to despise human respect is to confess Christ; while on the other hand, to follow its maxims as the rule of one's conduct is to deny Christ. It can be only one way or the other, for our Lord plainly says: "He that is not with Me, is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth." ⁷

It is impossible to observe neutrality when on one side is the call of the Creator, and on the other is the siren song of the world. There is no gainsaying the fact that every one is called by God Almighty to do his duty, or he is called by human respect not to do it. No position, no state of life, no avocation in life but is subject to the call of God for liberty or to sycophantic human respect for slavery. "No man," says our Saviour, "can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will sustain the one, and despise the other." ⁸

To yield to human respect is to despise God, and no one is exempt from the temptation: it is as wide as the world, as old as mankind, and comes in every form and shape to every son of Adam. As has already been said, every one has relatives, friends, and neighbors; these form his world, and he is consciously or unconsciously acted upon by them or acts upon

⁶ Matt. x. 32, 33.

⁷ Luke xi. 23.

⁸ Matt. vi. 24.

them. Our conduct, our speech, even the most apparently trivial actions of our lives, may have far-reaching consequences. As a pebble when thrown into a smooth lake causes tiny waves to run towards the shore, so even the smallest of our actions, and the most insignificant of our words, may have their effects in others. We practically do nothing or say nothing without having some end in view, and our actions and speech are judged in different ways by a hostile or friendly world; every one, more or less, influences his family, his friends and neighbors.

This curse of human respect is responsible for more destruction than most of the moral evils in the world. The fear of censure, the laugh of scorn, the approbation of the world, have made cowards of many who have not had the moral courage to stand up for their God, their Church, and their liberty. They laid themselves down under the dominion of the devil, whittled away or totally destroyed the teachings of the Church, and sold their Christian liberty and freedom. To practise religion, to do works that are good, to be unashamed of Christ and of His doctrine is the summit of liberty, for it is "the freedom wherewith Christ hath made us free";⁹ to do the opposite is the depth of slavery. For the yielding of human respect is a great sin, and our Saviour says: "Amen, amen I say unto you: that whosoever committeth a sin, is the servant of sin."¹⁰

Let us see in what consists this prevalent and insidious sin of human respect.

To be deterred from the service of God for fear of what the world will say is the crime of a moral coward; it is most injurious to God; it is base, low, and mean in itself; and it is the greatest folly that can be imagined. He is a coward that has no courage or strength of mind; he is a coward who, the weaker his enemy,

⁹ Gal. iv. 31.

¹⁰ John viii. 34.

the more craven he becomes; he is a coward who, the more abject the slavery, the more he likes it; he is surely a coward who cringes to the world and obeys its dictates rather than the law of God.

When St. Peter was commanded by the Jewish Council to cease teaching the doctrine of Christ, he courageously replied, with the danger of death staring him in the face: "We ought to obey God, rather than men,"¹¹ and went on teaching that doctrine and asserting that Christ was the eternal Son of God, "whom you put to death."¹² These noble words, and the intrepid example of St. Peter and of his fellow Apostles, are a perpetual shame on all those who sell their conscience for the small bribe and the mean reward of a treacherous, sinful, and frivolous world. Nothing we can think of is more injurious to God's honor than the base cowardice of human respect.

Every mortal sin is without doubt injurious to God's law and God's honor, but there may be, humanly speaking, some extenuating circumstances that He will take into account. The passion of lust, the paroxysm of anger, the cravings of the drunkard, the excitement of the gambler, are indeed gravely sinful, but they are not to be judged with the cool, calm deliberation of the coward who places the infinite majesty of God and the cheap tinsel of the world in the balance, and allows the scales to weigh more in favor of the world than in that of its Creator. Is not this positively to prefer the world to God, and to serve it out of human respect?

God is infinitely beautiful; we can make no comparison between Him and any created thing, and as He is infinitely beautiful He is infinitely lovable. It is the first and essential law of religion that we love Him with a love of preference, that is, we must choose Him above everything in this world, even our own very

¹¹ Acts v. 29.

¹² Acts v. 30.

life. But the one who acts through human respect compares Him with some passing gain; is less afraid of Him than of the sneer, or the frown, or the laugh of ridicule. By a mean human respect the coward retreats from his position, he runs away from his post, he becomes a traitor to his God.

A traitor is justly abhorred, even if he became so to save his own life; he is despised even by those who have profited by his perfidy. No one trusts a traitor, those whom he has betrayed cannot, and those whose tool he was will not, because he is a traitor. The great traitor of all time was Judas Iscariot, and he was despised by those who gave him his miserable price for his Lord and Master.

Sometimes, indeed, great fear may somewhat unbalance the minds of those who are not of the strongest caliber. A man may be placed at a lonely post in battle with momentary danger of death; or he may be selected with a small company to charge a powerful battery in the face of a galling and deadly fire; or he may be called upon to go down in the under-sea boat with the chances of his emergence few or none; or he may be commanded to bring down a powerful, swift, and dangerous enemy from the clouds, with his own airplane not so well equipped, and fear may blanch his cheek, and cause his limbs to tremble, and his mind to waver for the moment.

But what makes the coward of human respect tremble, what adversary does he fear? Does he, like the martyr, fear a tyrant who will take his life? Does he, like the soldier on the battlefield, fear death in its most awful forms? By no means, but he fears the laugh, or the frown, or the loss of some position, or some passing gain, and for this he sells his God, his soul, his conscience. And this cowardice results from the fear of those whose lives are sometimes the vilest and whom he ought to despise. The prophet

David very beautifully says: "Be not emulous of evil doers: nor envy them that work iniquity. For they shall quickly wither away as grass, and as the green herbs shall quickly fall."¹³ If we are shocked at the apostasy of those who abandoned their faith under the threat of death in tortures, how much more should we be shocked at the apostasy of those who abandon the principles and teachings of their faith for far less?

By many persons this is looked upon as prudence and the opposite as the height of folly. But the apostle St. Paul thinks differently. "Let no man deceive himself: if any man among you seem to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written: I will catch the wise in their own craftiness. And again: The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain."¹⁴ Mere worldly prudence is that quality in a man by which he looks out for the things that belong to earth; heavenly prudence is the virtue rightly ordering the things which belong to man's end, and the end of man is God. Any other prudence, any other foresight which does not lead a man to the end for which he was created, is only blindness and the greatest imprudence.

Listen to what Isaias the prophet says on this very matter. "Woe to you that call evil good, and good evil: that put darkness for light, and light for darkness: that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter: Woe to you that are wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own conceits."¹⁵ And the Book of Proverbs exhorts the worldly-wise man in these words: "Be not wise in your own conceit: fear God, and depart from evil."¹⁶

¹³ Ps. xxxvi. 1, 2.

¹⁴ I. Cor. iii. 18-20.

¹⁵ Isaias v. 20, 21.

¹⁶ Prov. iii. 7.

Yes, indeed, the worldly-wise look down with a pitying smile and a supercilious air upon those whom they regard as fools because they do things opposed to the maxims of the world. But are they such fools in reality? A really wise and prudent man is he who looks to the end of his undertakings; in fact, it is the end that should rule the whole action. What is the gain? What is the profit? What is the outcome? These are questions asked by every man who begins any work. The difference between the worldly-wise, that is, the man who is ruled by human respect, and the one whose standard is that of God, is that the former is a slave and the latter is a free man. The man whose rule is human respect sells his liberty, his conscience, and his religion; this is indeed the worst slavery on earth, it is slavery of the hardest kind, slavery of the lowest type. Can the man whose standard is human respect look with approbation upon the martyrs, the confessors, the virgins, and all those who gave their lives, their property, their ease rather than betray their conscience and the inheritance of the faith? According to worldly standards those persons were most imprudent, but yet they handed on the faith to those who do not appreciate it, treat it lightly, or whittle it away according to their own whims and fancies. The glorious heritage given by Christ, and transmitted by Apostles, martyrs, confessors, and holy men and women through trial and suffering, is abandoned by the worldling and the weakling for a frown, a sneer, or a passing gain. Where would the teaching of Christ be were all men ruled by the devil of human respect?

There is a very prevalent opinion now abroad in the world which is, that religion is an affair of one's own conscience, that it must not be brought out into public life, but must be practised in secret, and, as it were, under cover.

But what is religion? In answer I say: it is the sum total of our duties to God and to our fellow-man. Religion is not a thing that can be put on or taken off like a garment; it introduces itself everywhere, it intimately enters into the actions of every-day life. Religion is life, for it is the bond that binds us to God. There are some who follow the false maxims of the world, and relegate their religion to an obscure place in their lives. They never speak of it, or if they do, it is with bated breath; they never practise it in public, they are ashamed of it, or at least apologize for it; they imagine that practising it in private will screen them from ridicule, and so they put a balm to their conscience.

It is very true that religion is not ostentation; it is very true that one who is needlessly boasting of his religion may be only a hearer and not a doer of the word; it may be that the words of St. James can be truly said of some: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."¹⁷ It can indeed be truly said of some who stand up for their religion that it would be better if they knelt down for it. We are not bound to carry our religious doctrines as did the Pharisees of old, and as the Pharisees of the present day do, for public show, but we are bound by the laws of nature, of God, and of His Church to practise our religion at all times and to acknowledge it when justly and rightly called upon to do so.

This human respect is not only most injurious to God but is most base in itself. For what can the world do to you if you despise it? At most it can laugh at you, can frown on you, can deprive you of its pleasures and its goods, and even if it took your life, you have freedom. How can any one be free by serving the false maxims of the world? It changes

¹⁷ James i. 22.

from day to day; its judgments are very uncertain; those who court it most are sometimes the very ones it condemns; it is influenced by whim, passion, and caprice. How any self-respecting man or woman can follow a course of life upon such standards can be explained only by loss of real self-respect and the sinking to the level of the trimmer.

The world at bottom really despises its votaries; such is the beauty of truth and purity that the liar and the libertine unwillingly acknowledge that those who practise these virtues are above themselves and render homage to them. The truthful man is the one who is trusted; the pure man is the one who is praised; the man of principle is the one who is admired, even by a secretly-scoffing and envious world. Christ was most powerful when dying upon the cross for truth and principle.

And so, the baseness of the time-server and the trimmer only falls back upon themselves, and they gain nothing even from the world. They give up the most precious things of God, they sell out their salvation, they abandon their conscience—for nothing. They glory in what they ought to be ashamed of and are ashamed of what they ought to glory in; they tremble before a shadow and are frightened by a scarecrow. “They have trembled for fear, where there was no fear.”¹⁸ They think more of what men say of them than of what God thinks of them; they are influenced more by things that cannot really harm them than they are by the terrible judgments of an outraged and angry God. If God justifies us, what need we care for the opinions of the world? “If God be for us, who is against us?”¹⁹ It is beautifully said by Thomas à Kempis in “The Imitation of Christ:”²⁰ “A very quiet heart has he who cares

¹⁸ Ps. xiii. 5.

¹⁹ Rom. viii. 31.

²⁰ Book II. chap. 6.

for neither praise nor blame: He will be easily content and be at peace whose conscience is pure. Being praised makes you none the holier: being censured makes you none the worse. What you are, you are, nor greater can be called than what God sees."

Let the world laugh, let it frown, let it judge: the day of the man who despises it will come—surely in the next world, and very often in this. It has no right to judge, and it is the greatest foolishness to subject oneself to its capricious judgments. The noble words of St. Paul ought to be always before the eyes of the trimmer and the time-server: "Do I seek to please men? If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."²¹ Neither will the one who is influenced by human respect, and it is the greatest folly to think that he can be the servant of the world and the servant of Christ. Even in indifferent and ordinary actions those are free who despise the mandates of the world; not that any one should be strange, or odd, or freakish, but there is a whole world of difference between that and the fads and follies of society. St. Paul's words to the Corinthians ought to be on the lips of every man who wishes to be free. "To me," he says, "it is a very small thing to be judged by you, or by man's day."²² Yes indeed, it amounts to nothing to be judged by the world, or by the passing fancies of its votaries, when it comes to the duty of serving God.

Here is an estimate of the world's philosophy given us by the great Cardinal Newman. "The world considers that all men are pretty much on a level, or that, differ though they may, they differ by such fine shades from each other, that it is impossible, because it would be untrue and unjust, to divide them into two bodies, or to divide them at all. Each man is like himself

²¹ Gal. i. 10.

²² I. Cor. iv. 3.

and no one else; each man has his own opinions, his own rule of faith and conduct, his own worship; if a number join together in a religious form, this is an accident for the sake of convenience, for each is complete in himself; religion is simply a personal concern; there is no such thing really as a common or joint religion, that is, one in which a number of men, strictly speaking, partake; it is all a matter of private judgment. Hence, as men sometimes proceed even to avow, there is no such thing as a true religion or a false; that is true to each, which each sincerely believes to be true; and what is true to one, is not true to his neighbor. There are no special doctrines necessary to be believed in order to salvation; it is not very difficult to be saved; and most men take it for granted that they shall be saved. All men are in God's favor, except so far as, and while, they commit acts of sin; but when the sin is over they get back into His favor again, naturally, and as a thing of course, no one knows how, owing to God's infinite indulgence, unless indeed they persevere and die in a course of sin, and perhaps even then. There is no such place as hell, or at least punishment is not eternal." ²³

Any one who dares to differ from these horrible, easy-going doctrines, so different from the teaching of Christ and of His Apostles, the world laughs at, frowns upon, or regards him as ignorant and behind the times. The world acts in the same way towards the dearest, most minute practises of religion and the dictates of a delicate conscience; they are scoffed at by it, so that no man with any feeling of liberty can afford to be guided by human respect.

There is nothing in actual life which can give us an adequate idea of the ownership of God over us. We belong to Him in a higher and more intimate relationship than anything we can conceive. The holy

²³ "Discourses to Mixed Congregations," p. 148.

psalmist David cries out: "Know ye that the Lord he is God: He made us and not we ourselves."²⁴ We belong to Him because He made us and destined us for happiness in heaven; He owns us, soul and body, with all their powers and faculties.

Now, the person who acts through human respect repudiates as far as he can this complete ownership of God; he throws aside his liberty, and puts himself under the slavery of the devil. By the very fact of having life he is indebted to God, and he becomes a coward and a time-server by forgetting the God who made him. Again, he is a Catholic; he has been brought into the Church by Baptism, and has been the beneficiary of other Sacraments given him by Christ the Lord. At this Baptism he renounced the devil, the works of the devil, and the vanities and false maxims of the world. And now he repudiates his promises, allows the devil to own him, does his works, and imitates and follows the world and its maxims. Surely this is base cowardice, surely this is ingratitude to the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Holy Sanctifier, surely this is the greatest slavery. St. Paul says to all men: "You are bought with a great price: be not made the bondslaves of men."²⁵

Think, then, of the folly of human respect; for to submit our conscience to the judgment of the world is far more foolish than to have a mob pass judgment in an intricate case of law or a complicated trial for murder. The world is a mob: it shouts, it roars, it rages, it has no reason, and is swayed by the passion of the moment. The Pharisees incited the mob to demand the blood of Jesus and the pardon of Barabbas the murderer. The world says that the man of conscience and of good principles is a fool, but he can retort that the world is mad, has no conscience, and is ruled by no principle. To say that the world is a

²⁴ Ps. xcix. 3.

²⁵ I. Cor. vii. 23.

mad mob, has no conscience, nor principle, and then be afraid of its sneer, or frown, or superciliousness is certainly a form of spiritual madness worse than that of the world itself.

Every Christian well knows that the world and God are opposed to each other; the world lies, the world is proud, the world is impure, the world is unjust, the world is avaricious. When Christ stood before Pilate He said: "My kingdom is not of this world,"²⁶ and this is the world He meant. What a terrible folly, what an abject slavery, to be tied to such a world as this!

Virtue perforce displeases the world. The man who serves God and follows the dictates of his conscience is a standing testimony against the world, and for that reason it hates him. No one ever stood for principle or for truth—no one ever could possibly do so—as Christ did, and no one was more hated; He was hated with the deepest hatred of hell as He hung in triumph on the cross.

The words of our Saviour spoken at the Last Supper to His disciples have been handed down the centuries and can be applied to each one of us: "If the world hate you, know ye, that it hath hated Me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."²⁷

"To realize," says Cardinal Manning,²⁸ "is to have a vivid and abiding perception of things unseen as if they were palpable, and things future as if they were already come. We read of Moses that he endured the wrath of Pharaoh as seeing Him that was invisible. All the terror of the earthly king was lost in the sense of the Divine Presence behind the throne

²⁶ John xviii. 26.

²⁷ John xv, 18, 19.

²⁸ "The Eternal Priesthood." p. 98. —

which overpowered all human majesty. St. Paul says we walk by faith, not by sight; but the objects of faith are eternal, the objects of sight are passing away. The invisible world is the substance, the visible world but the shadow. To minds that are not supernatural this world, loud and glaring, is palpable, and therefore thought to be real. The unseen is impalpable, and though not to be denied, yet upon such minds it has no action or constraining power. The great multitude of men live all day long as if there were no unseen world and no world to come. They do not meditate. They say prayers, but their prayers are not mental. The mind does not realize or aspire or stay itself upon God, upon the glory of the ever-blessed Trinity, upon the beauty of the sacred Manhood, upon the bliss of the Mother of God, upon the rest and joy of the saints, upon the fellowship we have with them now, upon the share which is promised to us in their rest and joy hereafter, upon the presence of Jesus with us always, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in every pure and humble soul. . . . If we realize these things as the merchant realizes the market-place and his bales of merchandise, or the money-lender his securities and his coins of gold, then we shall live in this world, but not of it, as those who have risen with Christ,²⁹ and are already blessed with Him in heavenly places.”³⁰

It ought to be our glory to despise the maxims and false philosophy of the world, of that world out of which God has called us to serve Him. If Christ had been of this world, as the Pharisees expected He would be, if He had not called it to account, if He had not stood for principle and conscience, it would not have put Him to death.

Thus it is that all true followers of Christ have suffered, and will suffer, persecution in one way or another from the world, for St. Paul says: “All

²⁹ Col. iii. 1.

³⁰ Ephes. i. 3.

that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”³¹ And this statement of the great Apostle is as true now as it was when he first uttered it; then paganism, vice and debauchery were rampant, and they are just as prevalent to-day; then the cross of Christ was foolishness, and it is the same in the opinion of the world to-day. For the world hates pain, the world hates the cross. “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness. But unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”³² Thus was it always, thus will it ever be: the man of God who stands for truth and principle will have trial and suffering, and it ought to be his consolation here and his hope of eternal reward hereafter. But the trimmer, the time-server, the man who is swayed by human respect, gets very little from a volatile world and lays no foundation for approbation in the world to come.

It may be objected by some: I am no apostate from the faith; I do not give up Christ; I believe in all the Church teaches, but I certainly do not wish to parade my faith on all occasions and at every hand's turn. No one is asked to do that; in fact, the parading Catholic may be suspected of insincerity, of doing this merely for earthly show or from selfish motives. There is no dress parade in battle, and it is then the soldier shows what he is; the same thing can be said in the battle of the cross—then the real Catholic shows what he is made of. It is one thing for the soldier to be ashamed of his uniform, it is a totally different thing not to appear in it from motives of prudence. It is one thing for a man to be always a consistent Catholic, it is a totally different thing to apologize for his religion. The soldier makes no apology for his uniform; neither should the Catholic for his religion. He is a

³¹ II. Tim. iii. 12.

³² I. Cor. i. 23, 24.

mean, contemptible coward who is ashamed of his religion, or who whittles it away because he thinks it will please somebody. He inflicts a great injury on Christ when he is ashamed of Him and of His doctrine. No wonder that the same Christ will be ashamed of him in the Last Judgment.

The man who is governed by human respect will stop at nothing; one day it may be a small fault, another day it may be a grave precept; he may begin with the holy water at the door of the church and end with denial of the Holy Eucharist in the tabernacle. Of him can it be truly said: "He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little."³³ Faith, the greatest gift of God, has been totally abandoned by those who have trifled with it; as a punishment, God has taken it away from them.

Which would you prefer to have, the fear of God or the fear of men? Our Saviour Himself tells us whom to fear. "I say to you, my friends: Be not afraid of them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you shall fear: fear ye Him who after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say to you, fear Him."³⁴ The time-server, the trimmer, is afraid, not of being killed, not of losing his life, but shudders at a sneer, dreads a laugh, or hates the loss of some temporal advantage; but he is not afraid of the Christ who died naked for him upon the cross.

There is only one thing of which a man ought to be ashamed, and that is, to do evil, to commit sin, but unfortunately some men and women are ashamed to be seen doing good. Our Saviour says indeed: "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven";³⁵ but that is levelled

³³ Ecclus. xix. 1.

³⁵ Matt. vi. 1.

³⁴ Luke xii. 4, 5.

at the Pharisees of all time who are ostentatiously pious only for the praise of men. But to omit the doing of good through the fear of men is just as bad, if not worse; in the one case it is vanity, in the other cowardice, and the coward is more despicable than the vain.

What will they think of me? What will they say of me? How will they laugh at me? These are the would-be momentous questions in the life of the coward. The world is full of such cowards when it comes to a question of religion, of conscience, and of principle; they call it caution, but it is well said by a Latin pagan writer: "The coward calls himself cautious, the miser thrifty."³⁶

These are they who boast of their independence, but in reality are slaves; these are they who boast of their honor, but in reality cringe before the world; these are they who say they esteem truth, but really love lying. The man of true principles stands by them in the face of all opposition.

Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be
just:
Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands aside,
Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified."³⁷

God alone is right; God alone is truth; God alone is liberty. He is your Lord and Master and can take from you all you have, even your life. He is your Judge, omniscient and omnipotent, and His judgments are more to be feared than the silly and fallible judgments of the world. There are two standards, the standard of God and the standard of the world: under which do you wish to serve? There are two scales which weigh our motives, thoughts, and actions; one is in the hands of God, the other is in the hands of the

³⁶ Syrus, Maxims.

³⁷ Lowell, "The Present Crisis."

world: in which scale do you wish to be weighed? The good pleasure of God ought to be of more value to you than the displeasure of a fickle world: which do you choose? God looks to eternity; the world sees only in time: do you wish an eternal happiness or a short life of fickle applause?

Everywhere we turn, throughout our whole lives, this choice of service is held out to us; no one is exempt from the call to the colors. The call is made in the holiest places, and in the highest offices of Church and state, as well as in the every-day transactions of the home, the office, and the factory. On one hand is the sweet, alluring call of God, and on the other the call of the world, which can be very vulgar, and worst of all, can be very dignified. "It can call to order sin which is not respectable. It can propound wise maxims of public decency and inspire wholesome regulations of police. It can open the churches, and light the candles on the altar, and intone *Te Deums* to the Majesty on high. It is often prominently and almost pedantically on the side of morality. Then again it has passed into the beauty of art, into the splendor of dress, into the magnificence of furniture, or again there it is, with high principles on its lips, discussing the religious vocation of some youth, and praising God and sanctity, while it urges discreet delay, and less self-trust, and more considerate submissiveness to those who love him and have natural rights to his obedience. It can sit on the benches of senates and hide in the pages of good books. And yet all the while it is the same huge creature of human respect and worldliness." ³⁸

Look around you and you can detect it in the eager and anxious seeker for political honors in city, state, or nation. He makes great protestations of loyalty to

³⁸ Faber, "The Creator and the Creature," p. 352.

Church and adhesion to principles to get votes and power, and when all is over he forgets his promises and makes apologies. See it again in the parents who deny their children the natural right to a Catholic education by sending them to irreligious schools; think of how this evil is increased by sending them to the higher non-Catholic schools, where their faith is either only tolerated or totally denied. Observe how men and women sell out to the devil of human respect in order to get into what is known as high-toned society. See how mothers allow their daughters to dress in the suggestive manner of these days, and how they themselves lead in this matter, because forsooth others in society do the same. Note how they allow their sons and daughters all kinds of liberty in frequenting theatres, ball-rooms, dance-halls, and wine-suppers, and all done through human respect, so as not to be odd, for, as they say, you might as well be out of the world as out of the fashion. But in the world's opinion, everybody is out of the fashion who does not agree with it; for in its eye not to be singular is to be like itself.

The boulevards of the world are wide, and are filled with great, laughing, boisterous throngs, and the great white ways are scintillating with many lights, and many allurements are there. But underneath it all are misery, remorse, and secret shame, for man was made to stand by his religious principles and his conscience. And so the laughing throngs dance along in the dance of death, and heedlessly pass by the Christ upon His cross. On one side is the crown of roses, on the other, the crown of thorns; on one side is deceit, on the other sincerity; on the one side is eternal death, on the other eternal life.

“It is not difficult to see the evils of this miserable world-presence, this spirit of which gathers all mankind up into an eye and throws its portentous fascination upon our souls. It causes men to be false and

insincere in their mutual relations, and to act inconsiderately with others. It destroys all generous enthusiasm either for charity or penance. It puts a man under the despotism of ridicule, which becomes a kind of false god to him. It is the contradictory of perfection and, while it is in force, renders it impossible, for it is always drawing us off from God to creatures. A brood of sins of omission follow it wherever it goes, sprung from shame and the fear of ridicule, and another brood of sins of commission, from the desire to please. In process of time, and the process is not slow, it establishes itself as an habitual distraction in prayer and meditation: and as to examination of conscience, that most real of spiritual exercises almost seems to supply food for the voracity of human respect.”³⁹

In order to fight against this devil of human respect think of what Christ has done for you; think of the shame He bore for you upon the cross. Think of the glory of the Christian name, and of the priceless heritage that has been handed down to you by apostles, martyrs, confessors, and all good men and women who have gone before you in the faith. Their sufferings made it easier for you, and you ought to appreciate that fact. Think of the end of it all, at the last grand trial of all men, when Christ will be the Judge. Then those who ridicule, who scorn, whose ways are the ways of the world, will say to the ridiculed and the scorned: “We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honor. Behold now they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints.”⁴⁰

Be gentle, be kind, be forbearing with all men, but stand by your religion, and obey your conscience; fear not the frown, nor the sneer, nor the ridicule, but do

³⁹ Faber, “Growth in Holiness,” p. 127. ⁴⁰ Wis. v. 4, 5.

your duty though the heavens fall. To do your duty in the face of obstacles, and to despise human respect, is to love God and keep His commandments, and thus the words of St. Paul will find a responsive echo in your hearts: "I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." ⁴¹ Amen.

⁴¹ Rom. viii. 38, 39.

ON THE DIGNITY AND INFLUENCE OF THE CATHOLIC WOMAN

“Who shall find a valiant woman? Far and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her.” (Prov. xxxi. 10.)

SYNOPSIS

Woman herself blind to her dignity.—Christianity and women.—Barbarism, paganism, and women. Some examples of great Roman women.—The original idea of marriage nearly destroyed.—Social life among the Romans.—Monogamy.—The decadence of morals among the Romans and Greeks.—The family is the foundation of society.—Christ on divorce.—The ideal governs.—Mary, the model woman.—The mother of the Maccabees.—Valiant women in Christianity.—The equal dignity of man and woman.—Men and women have not similar rights.—Woman supreme in her own sphere.—Feminism.—Birth control.—Abortion.—Divorce.—The response of women to the Church.—The nuns.—Lay women and society.—Mothers of great saints.—The great office of woman.—Final appeal.

THE dignity of woman is a subject which some but little understand and others do not really appreciate. Some look upon her as a being inferior to man and destined to be the slave of his passions and the plaything of the hour. Others are willing to admit that Providence has called her to be the charm and the ornament of life, but their ideas fall far short of the real dignity the Almighty has bestowed upon her. Woman herself is often very blind to this dignity; deceived by the overfervent descriptions of novelists, of newspaper and magazine writers, or by the treacherous adulation and wily ways of designing men, she loses sight frequently of the position in life to which God has called her.

The Christian faith alone, which finds a solution for every doubt, which teaches us that God often selects the weak to confound the strong, that faith it is which confers upon woman her real dignity. When man had almost lost and blotted out from his conscience the primitive revelation of the dignity of woman, her lot among barbarians became low and degraded indeed.

When there was no fixed place of abode, when life was nomadic and the tent or the hut erected wherever the owner wished; when war was the only means by which the barbarian held his property, and the chase or fishing the only means of livelihood, the inferiority of woman as the weaker one yielded to the natural strength and agility of the stronger. Social life, as Christianity teaches it, had no place in the mind of the untutored savage, and his woman became his drudge and slave and the object for the gratification of his animal passions. What beauty of body that would appeal to the higher esthetic qualities in a man could be found in such a drudge and slave? What social charms could she show in such a life as this? However, even in barbarism God did not wholly abandon the woman, for although the savage bought his wives in peace and captured them in war, the rudiments of morality were in his heart and he had some code of morals.

The history of paganism is also the story of woman's degradation; its pages are filled with the records of her oppression and bondage. Her sole power lay in being the minister of the capricious passion of man, to be thrown aside when passion was glutted, or a new and prettier face appeared, forsaken, despised and destroyed. In the ancient civilization women, children, and slaves had no standing; the world was not ruled by love but was subdued by force.

The patriotism of the ancient Roman made him

look upon himself with complete self-complacency and pride, and caused him to regard even his own wife as a being inferior to himself because she was weaker. The Roman law gave to him the absolute control of his wife, to cast her aside, or even to put her to death in certain cases. In the Roman times, especially under the Empire, the position of woman in society was very low. In the older times the Roman married his wife under religious sanctions, but later on these were wholly wanting and marriages were contracted by a mere civil contract. In consequence of this the union was broken at will and both parties had the legal right to re-marry. Under this system the obligations and duties of marriage were treated with extreme lightness and even contempt, to the degradation of the woman.

Cicero, the great Roman lawyer, orator, and philosopher, repudiated his wife because he wanted a new woman with money; Augustus, the Roman emperor, compelled a man to repudiate his wife that he might marry her himself. The Senator Cato made a gift of his wife, with her father's consent, to his friend, and after the friend's death took back his damaged gift; Mæcenas, the great patron of learned men, continually changed his wives; another famous Roman, Paulus Æmilius, changed his wives as he did his shoes, and boasted of it. Nor did women themselves, so low had they become, show less quickness in casting aside their husbands. There were many Roman women of the so-called upper class who reckoned their years rather by the number of their husbands than by the number of the consuls. This condition of things, like a frightful miasma, spread its baneful influence over society, destroying conjugal love and disrupting the home. It was regarded as honorable, and a man or a woman's standing in society was measured by the number of wives or husbands.

The original idea of marriage, that "a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh,"¹ was nearly wiped out from the mind of the civilized world, and woman was completely under the control of brutalized man. The civic and intellectual virtues were highly cultivated by the Greeks, but the virtue of chastity was almost neglected. The Roman poet Martial speaks of a woman who had her tenth husband; Juvenal writes of a woman who had eight husbands in five years; St. Jerome assures us of a woman at Rome who was married to her twenty-third husband and she herself being his twenty-first wife.

Polygamy was very common, especially in Asiatic civilization, and this was another means of the degradation of woman, because she shared the love of husband and the fatherhood of her children with other rivals. It is true that the domestic life of early Rome and Greece was founded upon monogamy, and the same must be said of the pagan Teutons. But in the later period of Rome and Greece this was praised more in the breach than in the observance. We have, indeed, noble Roman and Greek women who are an honor to their sex, but they fall far short of the beautiful Christian ideal of chastity, either in marriage or in virginity. In the rapid decadence of morals, women were bought, the same as among savages; concubines were publicly kept by married men without any thought of censure. The Roman emperor Augustus had many mistresses who were sought for him even by his own wife. Women of the highest rank, captured in war, were treated with great cruelty, and women in general were looked upon with the greatest cynicism and as totally inferior to man. Aristotle thanked God that he was neither a slave nor a woman.

¹ Gen. ii. 24.

The foremost and highest type of the most civilized empire of the world was the courtesan or prostitute, and the woman Pandora was looked upon as the author of all human ills. In this civilization of wealth, refinement, luxury, and learning the real wife amounted to very little; she could be put aside for a fairer, younger, and a richer bride. She had no power to refuse, nor any redress at law; she was only the sport of man's passion and soon became the victim of his hatred or contempt. The mistress is regarded as educated and refined; the wife as ignorant and coarse. The mistress enjoys the widest liberty; the wife is in domestic bondage. The mistress holds the sensual love of his heart; the wife is merely the keeper of his slaves.

Now the foundation of society is the family, and although the father is by the very law of nature the head, yet upon the woman devolves the care, nurture, and education of the children: "For the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world."² If the fountain is not pure, the stream will be polluted, so if the family life is not good neither will be the social life. If all the families in the state are good the state itself will rest upon a solid rock; destroy the goodness and unity of the family and society will sooner or later go to pieces.

In the beginning God founded the family upon the union of one man with one woman, and He Himself blessed the first marriage. And our divine Saviour, referring to this first marriage, said: "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder,"³ thereby putting the ban upon the whole world against all attempts at divorce from the bond.

Man cannot frustrate the designs of God, and the society which will try to do so will crumble into dust, as the course of history often attests. The morals of

² W. R. Wallace.

³ Matt. xix. 6.

any nation are in proportion to the morality of its families, and if these do not educate good men and women the nation is doomed. As has been said, the Roman state was founded upon monogamy, and this system, so natural and so much in accordance with the primitive idea of marriage, produced great and good citizens. By degrees the designs of God were tampered with and the results were something frightful:

There are few examples in history of such a rebound from the morals of early Rome to the unbridled license of later days. Every sphere of religious, domestic, social, and political life was corroded. Religion was laughed at as fit only for the lowest slave and the ignorant peasantry. Unmentionable Eastern luxury and vice drowned all the old austere simplicity of the former times; ungovernable and frantic depravity marked this period, and women's virtue was degraded both by themselves and by men to the lowest degree imaginable. Vices the most frightful and revolting were deified and were publicly practised in the temple and applauded in the theatre. Slaves, both male and female, were chosen from the most voluptuous provinces of the Roman Empire and were the originators as well as the ministers of the most horrible orgies of lust. Children saw nothing around them but lustful sensuality in action, in painting, and in sculpture, and quickly became corrupted in turn.

Bad as the city of Rome was, the cities of Baiae and Pompeii on the sea-coast of Naples exceeded it in nameless lust and woman's degradation. It was not even externally refined lust, it was not even hidden lust, but was the coarsest, most bestial and the grossest.

St. Paul with a master hand paints the horrible vices flourishing at his time in the Roman Empire in the following words: "Professing themselves to be

wise, they became fools. And they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts and of creeping things. Wherefore God gave them up to the desires of their heart, unto uncleanness: to dishonor their own bodies among themselves. Who changed the truth of God into a lie: and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause God delivered them up to shameful affections. For their women have changed the natural use into that use which is against nature. And, in like manner, the men also, leaving the natural use of the women, have burned in their lusts one towards another, men with men working that which is filthy, and receiving in themselves the recompense which was due to their error. And as they liked not to have God for their knowledge, God delivered them up to a reprobate sense, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all iniquity, malice, fornication, avarice, wickedness, full of envy, murder, contention, deceit, malignity, detractors, hateful to God, contumelious, proud, haughty, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, foolish, dissolute, without affection, without fidelity, without mercy.”⁴ Such was the condition of the Roman Empire as described by the inspired Apostle of Christ, himself a citizen of that empire, and perfectly cognizant of the facts he relates.

At length, after a long lapse of time, after the world had drained to the dregs the cup of infamy and degradation, after woman had been completely crushed beneath the heel of brutalized man, Jesus Christ our Saviour appeared upon the scene. He came to raise the world up to its former dignity, to restore to man the pristine beauty he had lost, and give to men and women the freedom of God.

⁴ Rom. i. 22-31.

Jeremias the prophet, six hundred years before the coming of our Lord on earth, speaks in this way of His mission to men: "Behold I will close their wounds and give them health and I will cure them: and I will reveal to them the prayer of peace and truth. . . . And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against Me: and I will forgive all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned against Me and despised Me."⁵ Christ our Lord perfectly fulfilled that prophecy in every action of His life, and in every word of His preaching, and His actions and words are summed up in the statement He makes of Himself: "I am not come to call the just, but sinners."⁶ He chose to be born of a woman, the grandest, fairest, noblest type of womanhood the world ever beheld or will ever see again.

The ideal governs more than the mere idea; the living, concrete model has much influence in the practise of abstract principles of morality; we follow the man of truth and heroism because he leads the way. Christ our Lord, the eternal Son of God, is the highest ideal ever presented to the mind of man for his imitation, and Mary His Mother surpasses all women in this regard. "My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."⁷

Cardinal Gibbons very beautifully and truthfully says: "The model held up to Christian women is not the Amazon, glorying in her martial deeds and prowess; it is not the Spartan woman, who made female perfection consist in the development of physical strength at the expense of feminine decorum and modesty; it is not the goddess of impure love, like

⁵ Jer. xxxiii. 6-8.

⁷ Luke i. 46-48.

⁶ Matt. ix. 13.

Venus, whose votaries regarded beauty of form and personal charms as the highest type of female excellence; nor is it the goddess of imperious will, like Juno. No; the model held up to women from the very dawn of Christianity is the peerless Mother of our Blessed Redeemer. She is the pattern of virtue alike to maiden, wife, and mother. She exhibits the virginal modesty becoming the maid, the conjugal fidelity and loyalty of the spouse, and the untiring devotedness of the mother.”⁸

Mary is the great model for all Christian women; she stands alone and unique as the great pattern of all womanly perfection; her reason was never obscured by earthly passion, and yet she is the most compassionate for sinners; her heart was always burning with the pure flame of God’s holy love, her soul was adorned with every virtue.

“This is that blessed Mary pre-elect.
 God’s virgin. Gone is a great while, and she
 Dwelt young in Nazareth of Galilee.
 Unto God’s will she brought devout respect
 Profound simplicity of intellect
 And supreme patience. From her mother’s knee
 Faithful and hopeful, wise in charity,
 Strong in grave peace, in pity circumspect.”⁹

Oh! truly does Mary the Virgin Mother stand out before our vision, clearly and luminously, as the most transcendent model of her sex. Truly is she the

“Woman, above all women glorified;
 Our tainted nature’s solitary boast;
 Purer than foam on central ocean tost;
 Brighter than eastern skies at daybreak strewn
 With fancied roses, than the unblemished moon
 Before her wane begins on heaven’s blue coast.”¹⁰

What may woman not do, following in the footsteps

⁸ “Our Christian Heritage,”
 p. 358.

⁹ Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

¹⁰ Wordsworth.

of this great and glorious model? To what heights of sanctity and heroism may she not attain, copying her life and her example? Mary's life is truly an ideal one; Mary's example is the epitome of all that is good and noble in our nature. Her humility raises her to the highest pinnacle of glory and greatness; her purity proclaims her the Queen of virgins; her heroism, second to that of her divine Son, gives to the suffering of all ages the model to which they should look; her influence in the elevation of woman cannot be weighed or measured; she combines in herself all that is truly great in pagan or Christian womanhood. We read of noble and great pagan women, gentle, kind, and withal heroic; we admire the delicacy of female honor as displayed by a Lucretia and a Virginia, the love and education of her children by a Sempronia. We scan the pages of the history of the Jewish mother of the Maccabees, giving up her seven sons to an excruciating death before her eyes, and our minds are filled with admiration, and our souls partake of the heroism of that noble woman who suffered such a fearful seven-fold martyrdom rather than that they or she would deny their faith. But when we transfer our gaze to Calvary, to the grandest object of heroism who stood beneath the cross of her Son Jesus, our admiration overleaps all bounds, and we are compelled to exclaim, the like was never known before.

No Spartan, Roman, or Jewish mother ever displayed such fortitude as Mary the gentle mother of God at the foot of the cross; with truth could she cry out in the words of Jeremias the prophet: "O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow."¹¹ Truly, at last the world has found the "valiant woman" desired by Solomon in the Book of Proverbs.

Yet in every age the Church has begotten valiant

¹¹ Lam. i. 12.

women as far surpassing their pagan and Jewish sisters as Christianity is above both. The Christian woman, following the example of the Mother of God, combines the gentlest and most lovable feminine nature with the sturdiest heroism.

Greece, Sparta, and Rome fail to give us an Agnes, an Agatha, a Cecilia, or a Catharine, who showed a sublime moral courage in martyrdom rather than tarnish the virginal purity of their souls. Greece, Sparta, and Rome cannot produce a Felicitas or a Symphorosa, each of whom gave up joyfully her seven sons to the exquisite tortures of martyrdom while looking on at their agonies; think of the sevenfold martyrdom of these noble women, the latter of whom was already the widow of a martyred husband. Greece and Sparta and Rome cannot claim a Perpetua, who turned a deaf ear to her old pagan father's entreaties to abandon the faith and save her life, nor heeded the cries of her nursing infant when they took him away from her breasts and led her to an atrocious martyrdom; nor can they bring forth another Felicitas who, fearing that martyrdom would not come to her soon enough on account of her eight months' pregnancy, begged God to hasten the birth of her unborn babe, and when her prayers were answered, joyfully gave up her life in horrible tortures. Pagan history has no record of any woman like unto Monica, who traversed sea and land and besieged the throne of grace for her erring son Augustine.

Oh! truly has the Church of Jesus Christ raised up woman to an equal dignity with man; truly does she proclaim her the peer of man in origin and in worth and in destiny. "You are all," says St. Paul, "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female.

For you are all one in Christ Jesus.”¹² This is the dominant tone of the Church’s teaching; God equally bestows His gifts upon man and woman, upon bond and free; all have been equally redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. But does this equality confer on woman similar rights and similar duties? By no means. Each sex has its own peculiar avocation in life; the one is the complement of the other.

As nothing is so disgusting as an effeminate man, so nothing is so disgraceful as a masculine woman; as a manly man is a being of beauty and strength, so a womanly woman is a being of love and tenderness. Whether as maiden, wife, or mother, she brings forth our respect, our admiration, and our love. In her own sphere of life she stands alone, unique, and beautiful. The gentler avocations of life are hers; she it is who nurses, soothes, and heals; she it is who, when the storm of trouble gathers, breaks that storm cloud by the rays of kindness, gentleness, and patient hope. Let her for a moment invade the domain of man, and she immediately loses man’s reverence and love.

I cannot refrain from quoting rather copiously from the works of an eminent writer on the general moral superiority of women over men. He says: “Self-sacrifice is the most conspicuous element of a virtuous and religious character, and it is certainly far less common among our men than among women, whose whole lives are usually spent in yielding to the will and consulting the pleasures of another. There are two great departments of virtue: the impulsive, or that which springs spontaneously from the emotions; and the deliberative, or that which is performed in obedience to the sense of duty; and in both of these I imagine women are superior to men. Their sensibility is greater, they are more chaste both in thought and

¹² Gal. iii. 26-28.

act, more tender to the erring, more compassionate to the suffering, more affectionate to all about them. On the other hand, those who have traced the course of the wives of the poor, and of many who, though in narrow circumstances, can hardly be called poor, will probably admit that in no other class do we so often find entire lives spent in daily persistent self-denial, in the patient endurance of countless trials, in the ceaseless and deliberate sacrifice of their own enjoyment to the well-being or the prospects of others.”¹³

There is nothing more disgusting, more repulsive, and sadder to the minds and feelings of good men and women than the modern cult of what is known as feminism. It is the assertion that women are not only the equals of men but have similar rights and identical duties. This doctrine, so clearly false, so much against the law of nature, and so destructive of the real rights and duties of women, is screamed with unseemly gestures from the cart-tail, the pulpit, the rostrum, and the soap-box by masculine women and effeminate men, and by these same persons is forced into legislative departments of state by threatening, bullying, and button-holing the legislators.

Women can never gain anything of real value by these opinions and methods, for nearly all the disabilities of women have been ameliorated by the Church and by good men in the state. The greatest enemy of woman is, in nearly every case, woman herself. There is another terrible evil for the most part promoted and fostered by women themselves, and that is the revolting crime of birth-control, which consists in the shirking of the fundamental duties of matrimony. By this most heinous practise human life is rejected or selected after the method of the cattle-pen or the poultry-yard, thereby degrading the woman to the level of the selective-breeding brute. Or if per-

¹³ Lecky, "History of European Morals," vol. ii. p. 359.

chance conception takes place, the unoffending human being is destroyed, thereby making the mother the murderess of her own child. All nature, all religions, pagan, Jewish, and Christian, cry out against these abominations of Onanism and murder, and those who practise them are sometimes punished in this life, but surely in the next if the practises are not stopped and sincerely repented of. The divorce evil is another of those means by which women are degraded. In this matter women are as much to be censured as men, and the woman, whether cast off herself or casting off the man and seeking solace with another so-called husband, is only a legalized prostitute, a disgrace to her sex and a menace to society.

From the foundation of Christianity the Church has ever and always maintained the inviolability of the marriage contract. She has done this in the face of persecution; she has stood up before the great and powerful of the world as the champion of the woman. The words of her Founder: "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder,"¹⁴ have been ever upon her lips in rebuking those who, for the sake of lustful passion, strove to trample in the dust their sacred, plighted marriage vows.

And in return for the Church's care woman has not been unmindful or forgetful of the great boon conferred. Oh! what a wonderful power does she exert in that Church and on society. Look over the history of Christianity from the very beginning and contemplate the vast amount of good done by women from the days of Mary the Mother of Jesus, and of Martha and Mary the sister of Lazarus, even unto this very hour. And what we shall never know this side of the General Judgment was done silently, patiently, without any blare of trumpets, or flourishing of banners, or earthly glory, or earthly praise. "A Roman lady,

¹⁴ Matt. xix. 6.

named Fabiola, in the fourth century, founded at Rome, as an act of penance, the first public hospital, and the charity planted by that woman's hand overspread the world, and will alleviate to the end of time the darkest anguish of humanity." ¹⁵

Look at the lives of the heroic women who, following in the footsteps of Jesus and Mary, gave up all this world holds dear to be ministers of grace and mercy to suffering humanity. Look around you even today and you can see woman has not been ungrateful or unmindful of the dignity conferred upon her. Follow the young girl, timid, modest, retiring, as she leaves all the comforts of home life, and watch her when, as a Sister of Mercy, she recoils not from the most loathsome forms of disease; look at her as she lovingly bends over the wounded soldier on the field of battle, amid the roar of cannon, and whispers of Jesus' love and welcome into his dying ear; admire her silently moving form, going about from house to house, carrying with her an aroma of God's peace and God's love.

"She once was a lady of honor and wealth,
Bright glowed on her features the roses of health,
Her vesture was blended of silk and of gold,
And her motion shook perfume from every fold.
Joy revelled around her,—love shone at her side—
And gay was her smile as the glance of a bride,
And light was her step in the mirth-sounding hall,
Till she heard of the daughters of Vincent de Paul.

"Behold her, ye worldly! behold her, ye vain!
Who shrink from the pathway of virtue and pain,
Who yield up to pleasure your nights and your days,
Forgetful of service, forgetful of praise.
Ye lazy philosophers, self-seeking men,
Ye fireside philanthropists, great at the pen,
How stands in the balance your eloquence weighed
With the life and the deeds of that high-born maid?" ¹⁶

Look at the nun as, with gentle smiles and open

¹⁵ Lecky, "History of European Morals," vol. ii. p. 80.

¹⁶ Gerald Griffin.

arms, she receives from degradation and sin one of her own sex destroyed by the passions of men. She does not frown upon the unfortunate; she does not gather her skirts and pass by with a cold, supercilious smile like the Pharisee. No, but like the Master who forgave the Magdalen, she raises up her sister, consoles her, comforts her and bids her "sin no more." See her in the school-room, gentle, untiring and forbearing, educating through many trials and heartaches the ignorant, the poor, and the lowly, lifting up the young to a knowledge of God, and instilling into the youthful mind, hour by hour, day by day, duty, attachment to and love of truth, and love of God and neighbor. Think of the vast multitude of good women that now are in the Church, and you have to thank God for having raised up woman to her original but almost forgotten dignity.

What would become of Christian civilization were it not for good, gentle, kindly, patient woman? How many thousands of homes there are from which God withdraws His avenging hand by the prayers and tears of a wife, a daughter, a sister? How many would be carried out dead to God were He not to restore life, almost at the grave, by the sorrow of some other widow of Naim? How many have been raised up from putridity in sin by the prayers and tears of other Marthas and Marys? How many women are angels of atoning mercy and ministers of God's grace for the sins of fathers, husbands, and brothers? The world has nothing to fear if women will but keep before their mind what the Church has done for them and what the Church and society expect of them. Woman can change the face of society, for man is trained by her, and "whatever makes men good Christians, makes them good citizens."¹⁷

Women may not be great architects, great philos-

¹⁷ Daniel Webster, Plymouth Speech.

ophers, great scientists, great in statesmanship, but they can be immeasurably greater in their own sphere, for they have their hand upon the throbbing pulse of the world, and can well know the condition of society and administer healing remedies. Think of the noble mothers of St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil the Great, and of how much they share the renown of the sons they reared. Think of the peerless Mother of the world's Redeemer!

Woman stands at the threshold of life and at the gate of death; she is the first in infancy and youth, and she it is who smooths the dying brow. Man relies upon himself in the day of his strength; when weakness and sorrow overtake him he yearns for the gentle smile, the kindly eye, the sweet comforting words of woman. Man's time is the meridian of life; woman's when the morning's dawn first appears and when the evening's shadows gather. She stands near the cradle, near the cross, near the grave. There is no cradle over which bends not the smiling, anxious face of a mother; no cross beneath which a woman does not stand; no grave unwatered by her tears and unhallowed by her prayers.

O woman, what a grand dignity is yours! Will you appreciate what Jesus has done for you, and be grateful to Him in return? Will you be frivolous, worldly, vain, or modest, gentle, and kind? Will you spread you "the good odor of Christ"¹⁸ or the deadly stench of hell? Make home happy; all the treasures of the world cannot make a happy home. Be kind, be gentle, be loving, let your smiles dispel the clouds of despondency and grief; let your words cheer up the troubled heart; let your lives be lives of love for God and man.

"Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,
'Tis woman's whole existence."¹⁹

¹⁸ II. Cor. ii. 15.

¹⁹ Byron, "Don Juan," Canto I

"Be a woman! on to duty!
 Raise the world from all that's low,
 Place high in the social heaven
 Virtue's fair and radiant bow;
 Lend thy influence to each effort
 That shall raise our nature human,
 Be not fashion's gilded lady—
 Be a brave, whole-souled, true woman."²⁰

And in conclusion let me exhort you in the words of the great Cardinal Newman. "What shall bring you forward in the narrow way, if you live in the world, but the thought and the patronage of Mary? What shall seal your senses, what shall tranquillize your heart, when sights and sounds of danger are around you, but Mary? What shall give you patience and endurance, when you are wearied out with the length of the conflict with evil, with the unceasing necessity of precautions, with the irksomeness of observing them, with the tediousness of their repetition, with the strain upon your mind, with your forlorn and cheerless condition, but a loving communion with her? She will comfort you in your discouragements, solace you in your fatigue, raise you after your falls, reward you for your successes. She will show you her Son, your God and your all. When your spirit within you is excited, or relaxed, or depressed, when it loses its balance, when it is restless and wayward, when it is sick of what it has and hankers after what it has not, when your eye is solicited with evil, and your mortal frame trembles under the shadow of the tempter, what will bring you to yourselves, to peace and to health, but the cool breath of the Immaculate and the fragrance of the Rose of Sharon? It is the boast of the Catholic religion that it has the gift of making the young heart chaste; and why is this, but that it gives us Jesus for our food and Mary for our nursing Mother? Fulfil this boast in yourselves; prove to the

²⁰ Edward Brooks.

world that you are following no false teaching, vindicate the glory of your Mother Mary, whom the world blasphemes, in the very face of the world, by the simplicity of your own deportment and the sanctity of your words and deeds.”²¹

²¹ “Discourses to Mixed Congregations,” p. 280.

ON THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

“From the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife. And they two shall be in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.”
(Mark x. 6-9.)

SYNOPSIS

The family is the foundation of society.—God instituted the family.—God married our first parents.—The indissolubility of marriage.—God’s designs in marriage.—Marriage has rights and duties.—What is marriage?—Love is the strongest force in human nature.—Religion and marriage.—No one is bound to marry.—The duties attached to marriage.—The family, the state, the Church.—The troubles of society and marriage.—The Christian family.—The sacrament.—The ends of marriage.—How the Church guards marriage.—The power of the family.—The Church alone has jurisdiction over Christian marriage.—Marriage without religious motives.—The great battle of all time.—Religion and love in marriage.—The ideal marriage.—Marriage and lust.—Divorce.—Hasty marriages.—Mixed marriages.—Authority in the family.—The good mother.—Contentment.—Subjection of children to parents.—Peace.

THE foundation or basis of human society is the family, which is beyond and above all of incomparably more importance than any other element in it. As the heart is to the body, so is the family to the state; for if the heart will not perform its function, if it ceases to send the blood to the farthest extremities of the body, if it wholly stops its pulsations, then death ensues. So also if the family will not do its duty, if it abandons its obligations, and shirks its responsibility,

the death of the state is as sure as that of the human body. Society is so dependent on family life that its advancement or its retrogression may be measured accurately by the goodness or badness of the families composing it.

The domestic society, or the family, was instituted by Almighty God at the creation of our first parents. He laid down a law founded upon the very nature of man, and sanctioned that law by a positive command, namely, that man and woman should leave father and mother, and should cling to each other, for the propagation and the education of the human race—that is to say, the multiplication of His children and the extension of His kingdom on earth and in the world beyond the grave.

Even the pagan philosopher Cicero had a glimpse of all this in his mind when he wrote: “The first bond of society is marriage; the next, our children; then the whole family and all things in common.”¹ God Himself married our first parents, and gave them the first nuptial blessing of the human race and commanded that what He “hath joined together, let no man put asunder.” So strong, then, are the bonds of this holy union that when legitimately contracted they cannot be broken except by death.

In the beginning, when God presented to Adam our first mother Eve, Adam said: “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,”² because God had made her from the very body of our first parent. And therefore St. Paul says: “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.”³ So sacred is this alliance that the same Apostle does not hesitate to call it a great mystery. “This is a great sacrament: but I speak in Christ and in the Church.”⁴

¹ De Officiis, I. 17.

² Gen. ii. 23.

³ Ephes. v. 28.

⁴ Ephes. v. 32.

If this union in marriage, this foundation of all society, is so holy in the eyes of God that it cannot be broken without the severest penalties to the individual and to society itself, then it must be looked upon as belonging to and imbedded in the very bed-rock of human nature. It must be regarded as the eternal design of God Himself as a means of communicating His goodness and happiness to His creatures. It must be viewed as the grand object for which He created the world, and made it for the use of man, to whom He gave dominion over it. "And God created man to His own image: to the image of God He created him, male and female He created them. And God blessed them, saying: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth." ⁵

It must, then, have been the wonderful mystery of the Incarnation He had in mind, when His only beloved Son assumed our human nature and died for our salvation upon the cross. Mary is a true daughter of our first mother Eve, and Christ the eternal Son of God is on His Mother's side a true son of Adam. As St. Augustine very beautifully says: "In the very outset, Adam and Eve were the parents of all nations—not of the Jews only; and whatsoever was shadowed forth in Adam concerning Christ, of course pertained to all nations which have salvation in Christ." ⁶

This marriage union, so holy in its institution, and so sublime in its object, has certain sacred rights and duties belonging to it.

What is marriage? It is a state of life arising from the agreement between a man and a woman to leave all things else, and bind themselves in a union of mind and purpose until death severs the bond.

⁵ Gen. i. 27, 28.

⁶ On St. John's Gospel, Tract. IX. No. 10.

One of the strongest forces in human nature is love, love of God, love of oneself, love of the neighbor. It is a particular form of love that impels a man and a woman to cleave to each other, in the intimate and peculiar state of marriage. It is of such a pressing and overwhelming nature as to dominate all other human loves and impel its possessors to bear all trials for its attainment and give up all other human loves for its possession. It is so deeply rooted in the human heart that it survives all times, all troubles, all vicissitudes, and is as fresh and vigorous in the human race today as when it was first implanted in the hearts of our first parents. The religious sense of mankind has always made this contract a wholly different one from all other contracts, and has clothed it with a sacred character. And so, among all peoples, both barbarous and civilized, pagan, Mohammedan, Jewish, and Christian, the union of man and woman in marriage has always been attended by some religious ceremony. It is an echo or a shadow, more or less distinctly heard or seen, of the first marriage in the garden of Eden, when God united our first parents and blessed their union. It is not of man's invention, and its character is of such a nature as to make it clear to all men by the light of the natural law.

No one is bound to enter into this marriage union, but the impulse is so strong, the necessity so imperative, that the vast number of the human race contract marriage. When, then, a man and a woman agree to take each other for husband and wife, they must accept all the conditions and duties attached to that state by the law of God, for if He gives privileges to the married couple He also imposes corresponding obligations. As authority and obedience are the basis of society, and as society is founded on the family, so in the family must be practised these two fundamental principles.

St. Paul was only promulgating the natural law

when he said: "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as it behooveth in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter towards them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to indignation, lest they be discouraged."⁷ Neither authority nor obedience can exist in any family unless it is founded on love; so that love is the root, love is the power, love is the foundation of all. By the very law of nature marriage is indissoluble—that is, it cannot be broken except by the death of one of the contracting parties. This is perfectly clear from the obligations which it brings about, for if there were no permanency in the union there would be a strong tendency to frustrate one of the principal ends of marriage, the procreation of children, or the proper care and education of those who may have been already begotten.

Man, coming into this world as a rational being, is helpless and dependent upon others for his physical, social, and religious wants. From whom can he obtain the help necessary for his well-being except from his parents? Who are the nearest to him? Who are they that by the law of nature are bound to give this help, if not his own father and mother, the authors, under God, of his being? Man is born into society with social qualities and social wants; no one exists for himself alone; society acts upon every one and is in turn acted upon by every individual composing it. Besides that, man is a religious being, and has certain fixed duties to his Creator, in common with his fellow man. By the very fact, therefore, of his existence he is a member of the domestic society, or the family, a member of the civil society, or the state, and a member of the religious society, or the Church.

The rights of God are above all other rights, and

⁷ Col. iii. 18-21.

these must be protected and enforced in the family, and if every family will do this it is easy to see how the state, or civil society, will conduct itself. The great troubles today in civil society are directly or indirectly traceable to the families composing it.

Now that we are living under the Christian Dispensation, under that law of love which Christ brought upon the earth, it is necessary that we speak to you upon the Christian family.

Christ our Lord raised the natural contract of marriage into the dignity of a sacrament, and conferred upon it all necessary blessings and graces.

When God sets before us any end, He also in His divine providence gives us all the means necessary to the attainment of that end, and this He has done by means of the Sacrament of Matrimony. It was at the marriage-feast in Cana of Galilee, where Jesus and His Mother were amongst the invited guests, that He showed forth His power by changing water into wine at her request.⁸ And "this beginning of miracles" was performed by Him to be preached throughout the world until the end of time, in order to show what He thought of the natural contract even before He made it a sacrament. As St. Augustine says: "The Lord, in coming to the marriage to which He had been invited, . . . wished to assure us that He was the Author of marriage."⁹

Christian marriage is defined as "a sacrament of the New Law giving grace to sanctify the legitimate union of a man and a woman, and for the pious reception and holy education of offspring."¹⁰

St. Paul, referring to the words of Adam as found in the Book of Genesis: "A man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall

⁸ John ii.

¹⁰ Sabetti-Barrett, 27th ed.,

⁹ On St. John's Gospel, p. 843.
Tract IX. No. 2.

be two in one flesh,"¹¹ says distinctly to the Ephesians, and through them to the whole world: "This is a great sacrament: but I speak in Christ and in the Church."¹² For as Christ is the Head of the Church, as she is His spotless spouse; as the first woman came from the side of Adam, and as the Church came from the side of Christ, so marriage mystically shows forth the union of Christ and His Church, in the unbreakable union of one man and one woman. St. Paul very beautifully expresses this idea: "The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the Head of the Church: He is the Saviour of his body. Therefore as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things. Husbands, love your wives as Christ also loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it."¹³

The marriage of all baptized persons always has been regarded by the Church as a sacrament of the New Law when the contract is entered into with a legitimate and proper rite or ceremony, and therefore between baptized persons the contract of marriage cannot be valid without at the same time being a sacrament."¹⁴ The Council of Trent severely condemns those who deny that this contract is a sacrament. "If any one shall say that Matrimony is not truly and expressly one of the seven sacraments of the Evangelical Law instituted by Christ the Lord, but that it has been invented by men in the Church, and that it does not confer grace, let him be anathema."¹⁵

"The primary end of marriage is the procreation and the education of offspring; the secondary is mutual help and remedy against concupiscence. The essential properties of marriage are unity and indissolubility, which obtain their peculiar firmness in Christian mar-

¹¹ Gen. ii. 24.

¹² Ephes. v. 32.

¹³ Ephes. v. 23-25.

¹⁴ Canon 1012.

¹⁵ Session XXIV. Canon 1.

riage by reason of the sacrament.”¹⁶ If we except the Holy Eucharist, the Church surrounds no other sacrament with such bulwarks and safeguards as the Sacrament of Matrimony, and this she does because Christian marriage is the foundation of the Christian home as well as of the Christian state.

Luther and his followers tried to destroy it and degrade it, and by doing so to undermine the foundations of Christian society, but the Church stood firm and opposed all attempts of ancient and modern innovators to destroy this work of God. She has adorned the marriage contract with the most beautiful and touching ceremonial in her liturgy and has allowed the married couple to receive holy Communion within the sanctuary, with hosts especially consecrated at their nuptial Mass; she gives a special blessing twice to the woman, separate altogether from the general blessing of the people, and has a special Mass for the bridegroom and the bride.

All this redounds to the good of society, for although good soldiers may be trained in the camp, although good judges may sit upon the bench, although good legislators may assemble in council, and good chiefs may reign and rule, yet all society owes its strength and stability to the good family.

“They say that man is mighty,
He governs land and sea,
He wields a mighty sceptor
O’er lesser powers that be;
But a mightier power and stronger
Man from his throne has hurled,
For the hand that rocks the cradle
Is the hand that rules the world.”¹⁷

Since Christian marriage is a sacrament of the New Law, it follows that the Church has control over it. She alone can legislate concerning it, and determine

¹⁶ Canon 1013.

¹⁷ Wallace, “What Rules the World.”

in what manner and under what circumstances the contract can be made. She has this right by virtue of her divine foundation, and does not derive this power by the consent of any secular government. For just as the civil power for the public good has the right to make laws regulating wills and deeds and civil contracts, so the Church for the same reason has the right to regulate the laws of matrimony. In doing this she is only acting according to her divine commission and is infringing upon the right of no secular state. For if it is a sacrament among Christians, and that is a matter of divine faith which no Catholic can deny, then surely the state has no authority over it, but the Church alone has. She alone can say when, and where, and how the contract can be made, and that all other contracts made in violation of her laws are null and void.

Religion, then, is necessary for, and is the foundation of, the Christian family; religion is the bond that binds it together, and any attempt to erect it upon any other foundation is only to build upon the shifting sand. To enter upon marriage merely for the gratification of the senses; to enter upon marriage for money or lust, or for the external appearances of either party, is surely to frustrate, if not altogether destroy, the end for which God intended it. Listen to what the archangel Raphael told the young Tobias in reference to marriage: "Hear me, and I will show thee who they are, over whom the devil can prevail. For they who in such manner receive matrimony, as to shut out God from themselves, and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust, as the horse and mule, which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power."¹⁸

Even the pagans had a good idea of what makes a happy marriage; the poet Horace says: "Happy

¹⁸ Tobias vi. 16, 17.

and thrice happy are they who enjoy an uninterrupted union, and whose love, unbroken by any complaints, shall not dissolve until the last day.”¹⁹ No, marriage is not based upon pleasure or interest—it is founded upon something nobler and higher, upon the highest aspirations of the human heart; it is based upon love, the only real love, the love of God. Take away this love, and what is left? Yes, the heart of man loves, but his love is fickle and fleeting, his love for woman degenerates into lust, unless that love is controlled by religion. Religion is the first element, and if it is wanting in the home, nothing, absolutely nothing, can supply its place.

The great battle cry of the world, from time immemorial, has been “*pro aris et focus*”—for the altar and the fireside; the bloodiest battles of the world have been fought for religion and the home, because upon them is founded all society. Take them away and society is lost and destroyed, and man becomes like unto a gibbering ape, for even the lowest savages have some form of religion and some primitive idea of a home.

Under the guardianship of religion love never ceases; disease, poverty, adverse circumstances, even death cannot destroy it. Under the guardianship of religion the young man and woman plight their solemn vows and take each other for husband and wife at the altar, walk down the aisle of the church out into the world, and down the avenue of time, hand in hand, and love for love. Obstacles may, and surely will, have to be overcome; temptations and trials will be encountered, but will surely be resisted and conquered by mutual love, founded upon the love of God and upon religion. The passage of years and troubles only lend new lustre to and purify this conjugal love, strengthen the bond, and make more easy the prom-

¹⁹ “Carmina,” I-13.

ises made in the beginning. Earthly beauty, worldly wealth, social connections cannot sustain the strain made by every-day troubles upon the marriage tie; they only make the yoke more galling when they pass away, and, instead of increasing love, engender hatred and loathing and aversion.

A noted American writer very truly says: "The silken texture of the marriage tie bears a daily strain of wrong and insult to which no other human relation can be subjected without lesion; and sometimes the strength that knits society together might appear to the eye of faltering faith the curse of those immediately bound by it. Two people by no means reckless of each other's rights and feelings, but even tender of them for the most part, may tear at each other's heart-strings in this sacred bond with perfect impunity; though if they were any other two they would not speak or look at each other again after the outrages they exchange. It is certainly a curious spectacle, and doubtless it ought to convince an observer of the divinity of the institution."²⁰ This testimony from a man who was not a Catholic goes to show that even where there is friction, yea, even under very adverse circumstances, the divinity of the institution of marriage shines out clearly.

What must it be when no feelings are outraged? What must it be when no heart-strings are torn? What must it be when patience, charity, authority, and love reign? It is the ante-chamber to heaven; it is a foretaste of its peace; it is the beginning of the eternal, heavenly order; it is a replica of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. When the influence of religion is absent from the marriage bond, when it is entered upon from merely worldly or sensual motives, it becomes an intolerable burden, to be cast off at the first opportunity. "Men often marry

²⁰ W. D. Howells, "The Rise of Silas Lapham," chap. 4.

in hasty recklessness and repent afterward all their lives." ²¹

Yes, many men and many women influenced only by sexual lust would brave fire and water, would encounter all difficulties, would grieve parents and relatives, would sadden their friends, would throw reputation to the winds to gratify themselves by an ill-assorted marriage. Many men and women have vowed eternal, burning, all-consuming love for one another, and in a short time have sat down with shivering hearts over the dead ashes of their burnt-out passion; it was human, it was earthly, it was selfish, it burnt itself out, and nothing was left but the dead, white embers. For a while:

"Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again
And all went merry as a marriage bell." ²²

But after a short while the dirge begins; the soft eyes no longer look with love but with hatred, and the bell tolls the knell of the dead love. This is the reason of the scandals of the divorce court; this is why so many irreligious persons break up the home and, as far as they can, try to ruin society by divorce and pretended remarriage. This is the foundation of the quarrels, bickerings, and recriminations that begin in families, are blazoned in large type in the newspapers to the scandal of the world, and are infamously terminated in the divorce mill.

What state can long stand against a society composed of such persons? If the home stands for stability, the divorce court stands for destruction; if the home stands for purity, the divorce court stands for lechery; if the home stands for religion, the divorce court stands for irreligion. But the words of Christ: "What God hath joined together let no man put

²¹ Molière, "Les Femmes Savantes."

²² Byron, "Childe Harold," Canto III.

asunder,"²³ ring down the ages, and are as clear as the sunlight in the heavens. The inspired words of our first parent Adam: "A man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife,"²⁴ are as binding today as when they were uttered at the first marriage on earth.

The Church has always upheld the unity and indissolubility of marriage in the face of all opposition, and all the powers of hell and earth cannot make her swerve one inch. The law of Christ is binding upon all men without exception; no one, Christian, Jew, Mohammedan, pagan can be divorced from the bond, once it is validly contracted and consummated; all, all are equally bound by the law.

It is, then, a terrible thing to contract hasty marriage, to rush headlong into this contract without foresight, thought, and prayer; to be allured by a pretty face or a trim figure, for many a pretty face is but a mask for a false heart and many a trim figure conceals a distorted soul. It is a terrible thing to be drawn by apparently gentlemanly conduct, to be deceived by a show of fair words, to let the heart go out to a well-dressed, well-groomed, suave deceiver, and to find out, when too late, the fearful reality. "The soldier when helmeted repents too late of the fight."²⁵

There is nothing so disastrous in marriage as incompatibility of mind and purpose, and this is especially true of mixed marriages. The Church sets her face against them; they have been an anxiety to her from the beginning, and she, old and wise as she is, is forever cautioning her children against them. She knows well what they are, she knows the troubles they bring into families, and she laments the loss of thousands and thousands of her children on account of them. Religion should be the dominant note in the

²³ Mark x. 9.

²⁴ Gen. ii. 24.

²⁵ Juvenal, Satire I, at end.

harmony of the family, and it cannot be so in mixed marriages. In marriage, Catholic marriage, the union should be of

“Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one,²⁶

and this cannot be in a mixed marriage. We have a classical example of trouble brought about by a mixed marriage in the parents of St. Augustine. Patricius, his father, was a pagan; St. Monica, his mother, was a Catholic, and she suffered and prayed for years and years before she had the great consolation of converting her husband, and of seeing her erring son baptized and on the way to become the light and doctor of the Church. But all women in mixed marriages are not Monicas, nor are their children regenerated Augustines.

Beware of mixed marriages, for they are the prolific source of discontent, of trouble, or quarrels, and of loss of faith. Generally those who contract them are the very ones whose faith is already weak and who need help in this most important virtue. Faith is life; religion is as the very air we breathe and the food we take for our sustenance; no man or woman can live a full life without faith and religion. Nothing should interfere with this life, and interference, openly or secretly, in many subtle ways, comes in mixed marriage. In the lives of the parties themselves; in the upbringing and education of children, if they have any; in church attendance; in a hundred different ways, in the intimacy of married life, there is an open or secret clash of ideas and ideals. Sometimes promises of non-interference are openly broken, or carelessly forgotten, and many a person rues the day—the fatal day—they ever entered upon that marriage.

As the family is the foundation of society, it must

²⁶ Von Munch Bellinghausen.

be cemented and built upon the solid concrete of authority. And authority comes from God, as St. Paul says: "There is no power but from God,"²⁷ and in marriage this must mean that the husband is the head. This is so by the very law of nature, and implies no servility or degradation of the wife or of the children. It is founded on reverence and love, for St. Paul again very beautifully says: "Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord: Because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the Head of the Church."²⁸ This does not mean that the man is the absolute lord and master to domineer and rule as a tyrant and as he pleases. It can mean only one thing—and that is, that the authority of the husband must be founded upon love. "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it."²⁹

The authority over children is equally shared by the parents, but the responsibility for his wife and children is primarily upon the father. He cannot shirk his duty; he cannot throw the whole burden upon his wife, and he must be a helper and a positive support to her, not only in worldly matters, but in the Catholic education of their children. God will hold him responsible for his wife and children, that they practise their faith, above all things else, and that they are also provided for in the things of this world. He is only a coward who shirks his great responsibilities in these things, and who imagines that because he provides for the material upkeep of the home he is absolved from all else beside. No, there is something more for man than a house and food and clothing, and that is the observance of God's law. The teaching of that law by word and example must come from the father before all others. The first school of the

²⁷ Rom. xiii. 1.

²⁹ Ephes. v. 25.

²⁸ Ephes. v. 22, 23.

world is the home, and the first teachers in the world are the parents, and the principal of that school is the father.

And what shall I say of the mother? Is there anything on earth more beautiful, more sweet, more loving than a good mother? Sacred and profane literature never tire of her praises; she is the noblest of God's handiwork; she it is who keeps the world together, and gives to society its tone and quality. What would the world be without good mothers? Were it not for them it would fall into anarchy, and all the efforts of men would fail. "Houses and riches are given by parents, but a prudent wife is properly from the Lord."³⁰ "He that hath found a good wife, hath found a good thing, and shall receive a pleasure from the Lord."³¹ A good wife and mother keeps the house together by love and by faith and by patience. Solomon cries out: "Who shall find a valiant woman? Far and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her. The heart of her husband trusteth in her and he shall have no need of spoils. She will render him good and not evil, all the days of her life."³²

Truly, whatsoever good is in man comes from a good mother, for men are what their mothers make them. Nothing can take the place of a good mother, and the holiest, the most heroic, and the greatest achievements of man have been done under her influence.

"With such a mother! faith in womankind
Beats with his blood and trust in all things high
Comes easy to him, and though he trip and fall,
He shall not blind his soul with clay."³³

Such a mother had the glorious St. Augustine, and though "he did trip and fall," his soul was not blinded

³⁰ Prov. xix. 14.

³¹ Prov. xviii. 22.

³² Prov. xxxi. 10-12.

³³ Tennyson, "The Princess,"
Canto v.

with the clay of this world, but was cleansed by her beautiful life and persevering prayer. The great son never tired in speaking of the good qualities of his holy mother, and attributes to her prayers his miraculous conversion. He cries out to God in the wonderful book of his Confessions: "Couldst Thou despise and reject from Thy aid the tears of such a one, wherewith she begged of Thee not gold or silver, nor any unstable or passing good, but the salvation of her son's soul? Thou by whose gift she was such? Never, Lord; Thou wert at hand, and wert hearing and doing, in that order wherein Thou hadst determined before that it should be done." ³⁴

St. Monica and St. Augustine stand out before the world for all time as the exemplars of what a good mother can do for her son. "There is none in all this cold and hollow world, no fount of deep, strong, deathless love, save that within a mother's heart." ³⁵ It cannot be too often repeated that the holiest and most beautiful shrine of love is in a good mother's heart.

The battles of the world may be fought by men, the laws of society may be enacted by men, the business of the world may be carried on by men, but the foundation of all depends upon the mother—the quiet, God-fearing, patient mother in the sanctuary of the Christian home. "She hath opened her mouth to wisdom, and the law of clemency is on her tongue. She hath looked well to the paths of her house, and hath not eaten her bread idle. Her children rose up and called her blessed: her husband, and he praised her. Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain; the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." ³⁶

Good mothers are the moulders of the race, because they are really the moulders of the home. In the

³⁴ Confessions, Book V. No. 9.

³⁵ Mrs. Hemans, "Siege of Valencia."

³⁶ Prov. xxxi. 26-30.

things of the soul, in matters of religion, in example to husbands and children and in self-sacrifice, they excel. The greatest, the purest, the most religious, the most self-sacrificing mother that ever lived was Mary the Mother of Christ, the God-Man. She is the greatest pattern and exemplar for all mothers of all time.

The Catholic home has its noblest ideal in the Holy Family of Nazareth, the home of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, and the nearer it approaches that ideal home the greater will be contentment here and eternal happiness hereafter. Self-sacrifice, most holy purity, and love of God, reigned in that humble home of Him who created the world; the will of God was fully practised there and contentment was perfect on that account. "Without hearts there is no home,"³⁷ and all the wealth and all the palaces and all the luxury of the world will not, and cannot, make a home, unless there is a union of hearts in love and a union of minds in a common purpose under God's law. Contentment is wealth, and not money, nor houses, nor lands. The home may be poor in the things of this world, but can be very rich in the things that really count. The greatest men that ever lived came from poor, but God-loving homes, and Christ, the eternal Son of God, came from one of these. "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," ought to be the motto in every home, and the home that does not practise that petition of the Lord's Prayer may be a meeting-place of father, mother, and children in which to eat and sleep, but it is not a Christian home.

Children must be subject to their parents, as the parents are subject to God, and by children is meant not only persons when they are young, but all those, whatsoever their ages, who live with their parents and have not set up a home of their own. They are bound to love, reverence, and obey their parents after

³⁷ Byron, "Don Juan," Canto III.

the example of Christ. "He went down with them" [Joseph and Mary], says St. Luke, "and was subject to them. . . . And Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and man."³⁸ If the eternal Son of God was subject to His own creatures, so should children be subject to their parents, and advance "in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men." The example must come from the parents, and all the advice, all the warnings, and all speeches will amount to nothing unless they are strengthened by good example.

The first duty of the child is obedience, and for that reason our Lord gave to all a wonderful example in His hidden life of thirty years. He did what He was told to do, and did it cheerfully, although He was the eternal God. Obedience is the bond that binds society together, and if it is not practised in the home society will fall in ruins. The obedience of children to parents is planted in the heart of man by the Creator, so that all nations, all peoples, savage and civilized, inculcate and insist on it. But although this virtue is embedded in the heart of man, it must be brought out, it must be nurtured and cultivated, for man is naturally prone to disobedience, as we all know only too well. Where is this nurture, where is this cultivation to come from, if not from the parents themselves? It often happens that parents who, when children themselves, were disobedient and unruly, are now wholly unable to teach obedience to their children, because they never practised it themselves. And so we frequently see families where there is no obedience whatsoever, and the result is, there is really no home, no contentment, no peace, but quarrels, discontent, and strife. Children should obey as our Lord Himself obeyed. He was obedient, because it was the will of His eternal Father.

³⁸ Luke ii. 51, 52.

Obedience brings peace, disobedience brings war; obedience is founded on love, disobedience on selfishness; obedience brings honor to the hearts of parents and children, disobedience brings shame to them; obedience fulfils the law of God, disobedience rejects it; by obedience is built up the family, by disobedience it is torn down. In fine, the greatest blessing in the home is obedience, the greatest curse disobedience. This is why Christ was obedient, for loving obedience is the foundation of society and the fulfilment of God's law.

Listen to the beautiful words of Father Faber: "The beauty of the earthly paradise, which God planted with His own hand, and whither He came at the hour of the evening breeze to converse with His fallen creatures, was a poor shadow of the loveliness of the Holy House during the eighteen years of the Hidden Life. We cannot guess at all the mysteries which were enacted within that celestial cloister. The words were few, yet in eighteen years they were what we in our human way should call countless. The very silence even was a fountain of grace. There were tens of thousands of beautiful actions, each one of which had such infinite worth that it might have redeemed the world. During those eighteen years an immeasurable universe was glorifying God all day and night. The beauty of the trackless heavens swayed by their majestic laws, vast unpeopled orbs with their processes of inanimate matter or their seemingly interminable epochs of irrational life; earth with all its inhabitants, the worshippers of the true God amid whatever darkness in all its regions, the chosen flowers of the by-gone generations in Abraham's bosom in the limbus of the fathers, the little children a multitudinous throng of spirits in their own receptacle beneath the surface of the earth, the souls worshipping amid the fires of purgatory—all were swell-

ing, as in one concourse of creation, the glory of the Most High. The wide creation of angels, above all, peopling the immeasurable capacities of space, sent up to God evermore, the God whom they beheld clearly with the eyes of their intelligence, a worship of the most exquisite perfection. But the entire creation was as nothing to the Holy House of Nazareth. One hour of that life outweighed ages of all the rest, and not only outweighed it on a comparison, but outweighed it by a simple infinity. There was the center of all creation, spiritual or material, in nearly the sequestered village of the obscure Galilee. Why should the center be there? Who does not see that God's centers in all things baffle the calculation of the sciences of men?"³⁹ No home can be as perfect as this, but the nearer it comes to that perfection the happier will be its inmates; and the farther it recedes from that perfection the more miserable will they be.

Parents must attend above all to the Christian education of their children, and not send them to schools or colleges where religion is not made a part of every-day life. They must see with whom they keep company, especially their girls, for sad experience has come only too late to many parents, who were remiss and careless in this important matter. Do not be deceived by the fair exterior and the plausible words of those who seek to keep company with your daughters, for the devil can put on the appearance of an angel. Know where your children go for amusement, and beware of the bad picture-house, the filthy stage, and the lascivious ball-room or dance-hall. Compel your daughters to wear dresses that are not an incitement by their suggestiveness to the lustful passion of every man they meet on the street, and let the mothers themselves set the example by their own modest attire.

Drive from your homes, as you would the most

³⁹ "The Foot of the Cross," p. 199.

loathsome plague, all bad books, papers, and pictures. Teach your children the value of work, and of self-reliance under God, and show them how to bear pain and trial with patience and resignation to God's will. Life is not a play, nor is the end of life pleasure, nor is the world a burlesque show. All must bear burdens, whether they will or not, and it is better to bear them in union with the will of God.

Let the crucifix—the emblem of Him who suffered and died that our crosses should be lighter—be in your homes in a prominent place. Do not be ashamed to have pictures of His Mother and of the saints upon the walls of your homes, to show that it is a Catholic home.

Again, prayer ought to be a daily duty in every family; in fact, all the work of the family should be done in a spirit of prayer, for St. Paul says: “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do it all to the glory of God.”⁴⁰ It is not the man who waits to get on his knees who prays, but the man who does all his work in a prayerful spirit, offering it to God; therefore the home should be a house of prayer. The helps of the Sacraments should be frequently used by every member of the family capable of receiving them, and in prayer and the reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist the parents should be the leaders. It is often the case that in these two important points the parents, especially the father, are the most lax and remiss of the whole family.

I must crave your forbearance for giving another beautiful description of the home of Nazareth from the pen of Father Faber. “There are many pictures,” he says, “which remain to this day in heaven, painted upon the unforgetting intelligences of the angels, of which the scene was Joseph's shop. The common lit-

⁴⁰ I. Cor. x. 31.

ter of a carpenter's working-place is there. Boards propped up against the walls, pieces of wood lying over each other in all shapes and at all angles, the floor strewn with chips, and straight lines of sawdust under the place where he has been sawing, various tools mingling in apparent confusion, and mutilated implements of agriculture lying outside the door: this is the scene which presents itself, and Mary is standing in the doorway of the house hard by. Joseph is showing Jesus how to do some work, and his broad man's hand is laid on the small hand of the Boy, and is gently guiding His fingers. He is doing it mechanically, for he is gazing rather at the Saviour's face than on the work. He sees the Boy all resplendent with glory, and his faith recognizes in Him the omnipotent Creator, the eternal Worker, who so deftly fashioned the countless worlds, and whose fingers he, the aged carpenter, is now venturing to press, to guide, and to manipulate as he wills. The old man's soul overflows with adoration, but tranquilly, without wave or sound, as if fed by silent springs from underneath. Nevertheless, he does not desist from guiding the hand of Jesus. He does not interrupt the lesson, which he knows to be so little needed. He is too humble for that. He understands his office. It was incomprehensible to him always from the first. The exercise of his authority could never be otherwise to him than the exercise of a sublime obedience."⁴¹ Here we have pictured for us by a master-hand the wonderful authority of St. Joseph, and the sublime obedience of his Foster-Son, Jesus, the Creator of the universe. What a home this must have been! The holiest, the sweetest, the happiest that ever was or ever will be in this world.

I will again call on Father Faber to explain for us the intimate relations of that home, because he can

⁴¹ "Bethlehem," p. 357.

do it a thousand times better than I. "As He is older now, and stronger," he says of our Lord, "the water-pitcher is not too great a weight for the Creator of the world. Yet it bows Him forward, and makes Him tread with a different step, as He climbs up that grassy path with His burden. Many are coming and going from the well. All have a word to say to Mary's Son; and He answers, sometimes with a word, more often with His eye. All are contented. He is a silent Boy; but there is something in His presence in that little town, like the sun in the heaven, whose shining and obscurity make more difference to man and beast than words can tell. Women with their pitchers upon their heads stop and turn and gaze upon Him, and then sigh with envy at Mary's lot, contrasting it with secret sorrows of their own in which their sons bear mournful part. The rough manners of the Nazarenes soften, when the sunbeam of His smile is on them. Cold hearts warm, and hard hearts grow gentle, and anger dies away, and all are divinely un-manned as He comes among them."⁴²

Oh! if homes, Catholic homes, were modeled upon the Holy Home of Nazareth, what peace and happiness would be there, and how society in general would be benefited! The husband and wife, surrounded by obedient, loving children, would go down the avenue of life to a serene old age, and, with their children around them, pass from this world to await them in heaven. Peace would be here and eternal peace hereafter.

Let me finish with the words of the great St. Augustine: "Peace between man and God is the well-ordered obedience of faith to eternal law. Peace between man and man is well-ordered concord. Domestic peace is the well-ordered concord between those of the family who rule and those who obey. Civil peace

⁴² "Bethlehem," p. 359.

is a similar concord among the citizens. The peace of the celestial city is the perfectly ordered and harmonious enjoyment of God, and of one another in God. The peace of all things is the tranquillity of order.”⁴³

The foundation of all peace is in the family, and can be found nowhere else. Amen.

⁴³ “The City of God,” Book XIX. No. 13.

ON THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS—ITS OBLIGATION

“From the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation: for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts.” (Mal. i. 11.)

SYNOPSIS

Sacrifice to God from the beginning of man.—Sacrifices in idolatry universal.—The primitive revelation almost destroyed.—The Jews and the sacrifices.—Sacrifice the central note of all religions.—What is sacrifice?—Christ’s sacrifice fully atones for sin.—The sacrifice of Christ is for all men and all time.—The sacrifice of Christ prefigured from the beginning.—It is perpetuated in the Mass.—The Mass is a true sacrifice.—The difference of manner between cross and altar.—Mass is offered to God alone for the same ends as the cross.—The Church and the Mass.—What does the Church command in reference to the Mass?—The Mass is an action.—The proper way to hear Mass.—Who are bound to hear Mass?—Holy Communion.—Final exhortation.

FROM the very beginning of man on the earth sacrifice has been offered to God. We find it in all times, in all places, in varying degrees and in various rites. As long as men held the primitive revelation given by the Almighty to our first parents, sacrifice was handed down by tradition. Ages before the coming of Moses we find Noe offering a sacrifice to God in thanksgiving for his deliverance from the Flood. And when God deemed the time opportune, He amplified and elaborated by revelation to Moses the wonderful and inspiring offerings, ceremonials, and sacrifices of the Old Law. But even when men fell away from the

primitive revelation and abandoned the worship of the true God and forgot the knowledge of Him, yet they did not cease to worship some deity. Nature-worship became the prevailing system, at least after the Flood, and man propitiated the gods of the air, and of the earth, and of the waters, by sacrifices, gorgeous and magnificent, or squalid and grotesque. These sacrifices were performed in the beautiful, graceful temples of highly-civilized Greece and Rome or before the totem-pole of the uncultured savage, clearly proving the innate propensity of the human race to religion and sacrifice of some sort.

“The remarkable fact of the prevalence of sacrifice in the heathen world from the earliest times known to history cannot be explained on merely natural grounds. The history of sacrifice is no doubt very obscure. But it is beyond dispute that wherever we find a people with even rudimentary national or tribal organization we find some known kind of public worship and that worship included some kind of sacrifice. It is also certain that in the more civilized nations of antiquity sacrifices were offered in recognition of a deity—not by any means a deity with the attributes of the one and supreme God, but of a deity, or rather deities, who were to their worshippers in the relation of beneficence, vengeance, or fatherhood. The purpose or significance of the sacrifice would everywhere depend upon the worshippers’ conception of the deity. When, therefore, we find, as we do in the Oriental, the Greek, and the Roman civilization, honorific or dedicatory sacrifices, and propitiatory or expiatory sacrifices, it is clear that these peoples had the notion of a deity or deities who were, on the one hand, so august as to be worthy of a worship that would never have been given to a mere mortal, and, on the other, so powerful, so ready to punish, that it was constantly necessary to avert their anger, just or unjust. It does

not seem possible to account for this state of things without having recourse to supernatural interference, or revelation.”¹

“But,” as the Book of Wisdom says, “all men are vain, in whom there is not the knowledge of God; and also by these good things that are seen, could not understand Him that is, neither by attending to the works have acknowledged who was the Workman: But have imagined either the fire, or the wind, or the swift air, or the circle of the stars, or the great water, or the sun and moon, to be the gods that rule the world.”² For thousands of years the primitive revelation was blurred, and almost wiped out of the souls of men, and they were groping in the darkness they themselves had made.

Even among that people which God had chosen to be the carriers of His revelation, and the perpetuators of His word until the dawn of a brighter day, we have many instances of idolatry and of sacrifices to false gods. At best their sacrifices were of material things, which were accepted by Almighty God, not by reason of their intrinsic worth, but out of His own goodness and liberality. “But when the fulness of time was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law: That He might redeem them who were under the law: That we might receive the adoption of sons.”³ The sacrifices of the Old Law had no power in themselves to save; the sacrifice of the New Law, prefigured in the Old, is the offering and renewal of the greatest sacrifice ever offered to God—the death of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, upon the cross, for the salvation of the world.

But what is sacrifice? Let me answer that question in the words of the great doctor of the Church

¹ Hedley, “The Holy Eucharist,” p. 152.

² Wis. xiii. 1, 2.

³ Gal. iv. 4, 5.

St. Thomas Aquinas: "Sacrifice is the offering of a sensible or material thing to God, done by a lawful minister, to acknowledge His supreme dominion over us and our total subjection to Him, and the thing must be destroyed or changed to show forth that acknowledgment." ⁴

In speaking of sacrifice to God the great Father of the Church, St. Augustine, says: "Now, not to speak of other things which pertain to the worship of God, surely no man will dare to say that sacrifice is due to any other than God alone. Many details in divine worship were usurped in order to give honor to men, and they were practised either by excessive abjectness or by loathsome flattery, but so practised that the subjects to whom they were exercised should be held to be men worthy of esteem and veneration. If much be given to them it becomes a question of adoration; but what man ever judged that sacrifice should be offered except to one whom he knew, or imagined, or pretended to be God? The great antiquity of the rite of offering sacrifice to God is clearly proved by the two brothers Cain and Abel. God rejected the sacrifice of the elder of these two, whilst He accepted that of the younger." ⁵

Sacrifice is much more than a mere offering, for we have in a loose sense the sacrifice of prayer, but that is totally different from the meaning of a real sacrifice, which must be the offering of something that can be changed or destroyed. By this destruction is shown the power of God over life and death and His dominion over all things.

Thus we find sacrifice, in one form or another, over all the earth, and at all times. It is the central and essential note of all religions. It was promulgated with elaborate rites and ceremonies by God's revela-

⁴ St. Thomas, 2-2ae. q. 85, art. 3.

⁵ St. Aug., "The City of God," Book X. chap. 4.

tion in the Old Law, and received its full perfection in the New.

The sin of Adam was a grave transgression of God's law, and this first sin was the cause and forerunner of the countless sins that have been committed by men. All the sacrifices that men have offered to God could not make up, or atone for, this first sin, and the subsequent sins of the human race. As far as men could, they outraged the infinite majesty of God, and nothing but an infinite atonement could balance the account.

And so the eternal Son of God, in order that by His obedience He could atone for the disobedience of Adam and of his posterity, assumed our human nature and became man. "For," says St. Paul, "as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners: so also by the obedience of One, many shall be made just." ⁶ This obedience, by which God's justice was appeased and mercy restored to men, had for its objective the death of Christ upon the cross. St. Paul again says: "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death: even to the death of the cross," ⁷ and thus, "blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross: and despoiling the principalities and powers, He hath exposed them confidently in open show, triumphing over them in Himself." ⁸ The triumphal sacrifice of Christ, by which He offered Himself to His eternal Father, is the great sacrifice foretold from the beginning, and ardently longed for by men. It is the only real, efficacious sacrifice of adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and satisfaction. All other sacrifices are as nothing in comparison, and were acceptable to God only in anticipation of it. "For if

⁶ Rom. v. 19.

⁷ Phil. ii. 8.

⁸ Col. ii. 14, 15.

the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of an heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled to the cleansing of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered Himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?"⁹

Over a thousand years before the actual sacrifice of Calvary David prophesied the coming of Christ, and the redeeming power of His Sacrificial Act. "Sacrifice and oblation Thou didst not desire. . . . Burnt-offering and sin-offering Thou didst not require. Then said I: Behold I come. In the head of the book it is written of Me, that I should do Thy will: O my God, I have desired it, and Thy law in the midst of My heart."¹⁰

And when the fulness of time was come that Holy Victim was immolated; the first real Priest offered the first real sacrifice. The altar was at Jerusalem, but the whole world was bathed in the Victim's blood.¹¹ This blood was poured out for all men, this sacrifice was made for all time, this atonement satisfied for the outrages of sin offered to God, for it was the eternal Son immolating Himself for the sins of men. It gave glory to God and peace to men, for, as St. Paul says, it pleased God through Christ "to reconcile all things unto Himself, making peace through the blood of the cross, both as to the things that are on earth, and the things that are in heaven."¹² The sacrifice of the cross was a perfect one, for the Victim was destroyed as regards His life, and that life was offered to honor God in His infinite sanctity, in His supreme dominion over life and death, and in the fulness of all His perfections. It was a perfect peace offering, because it was made to God in thanksgiving for His benefits

⁹ Heb. ix. 13, 14.

¹⁰ Ps. xxxix. 7-9.

¹¹ Origen, I. Hom. on Leviticus, No. 3.

¹² Col. i. 20.

and in homage for His gifts. It was a perfect sacrifice of prayer, for it was offered to obtain from the liberality of God all the favors and graces of which we stand in need for soul and body, here and hereafter. Finally it was offered in complete satisfaction for our sins, to atone for those sins and to make God propitious towards us; it was the offering of the all-holy, sinless Son of God to His Father for His sinful creatures: "Who His own Self bore our sins in His body upon the tree; that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice, by whose stripes you were healed."¹³

The holy Council of Trent, echoing the voice of universal and constant tradition in the Church, made this Canon against the religious revolutionists of the sixteenth century: "If any one shall say that in the Mass there is not offered to God a true and proper sacrifice; or that the phrase 'to be offered' merely means that Christ is given to us as food, let him be anathema."¹⁴

When St. John the Baptist saw on one occasion our divine Lord coming towards him, he said: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world."¹⁵ This allusion by the last great prophet of the Old Testament was made to show that Christ was to be sacrificed as a lamb for the sins of men. And again, St. John the Evangelist speaks "of the Lamb, which was slain from the beginning of the world";¹⁶ because from the beginning of the world, from Adam and his sons, from Noe and his descendants, from Abraham and his posterity, the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross was prefigured. Now, as the sacrifices of Adam, of Noe, of Abraham, and of the Old Law under the Mosaic Dispensation, were only types of the sacrifice of the New Law, so all have been gathered up and fulfilled in that wonderful sacrifice

¹³ I. Pet. ii. 24.

¹⁴ Sess. XXII. Can. 1.

¹⁵ John i. 29.

¹⁶ Apoc. xiii. 8.

of Christ and perpetuated in the Mass until the end of time.

St. Paul very clearly says: "As often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until He come,"¹⁷ indicating by these words that the Mass, in which bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ, continues the sacrificial death of Christ upon the cross.

Yes, the Mass is a true sacrifice, as true as the very sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. Our Lord never intended that Action to be transitory, as something that is over and done with, but He intended that "from the rising of the sun, even to the going down," day by day, all over the world, wherever an altar is erected and the Mass offered, the fruits and merits of His first Sacrificial Act should be perpetuated unto the end of time.

The Mass is as true a sacrifice as that of the cross, because there are the same Victim, the same Priest, the same motives for both altar and cross. In fact, the first great altar was the cross, the first great Priest was Christ, the first vestments were red—the crimson of His blood.

There is a difference between the manner of the offering on the cross and on the altar: the one was bloody and full of agony, the other is unbloody, "a clean oblation," and full of peace. The Council of Trent thus shows the identity of the cross and of the altar: "The Victim is one and the same, now offering Himself by the ministry of the priest who formerly offered Himself upon the cross, the manner only of the offering being different."¹⁸

That this is the constant, infallible teaching of the Church is proved by documents dating from her very cradle. We have the testimony of the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," before the end of the first cen-

¹⁷ I. Cor. xi. 26.

¹⁸ Sess. XXII. chap. 2.

ture; then in the second century, St. Justin, St. Irenaeus, and Tertullian clearly speak of the Eucharistic Sacrifice; in the third century, the witness is St. Cyprian; in the fourth, St. Cyril of Jerusalem; and finally, the wonderful testimonies of St. John Chrysostom and St. Augustine, and on and on, up to the Council of Trent, and to the present day.

The Mass is indeed the same as the cross, for the same Lord who offered Himself on that cross now offers Himself under the appearance of bread and wine upon the altar. The priest that we see is indeed a true priest, partaking of the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ, but the principal offerer of the sacrifice is Christ Himself. In the words of consecration the mortal priest uses the very words of the immortal Priest: "This is My body," "This is My blood," showing thereby that he acts by command and delegation according to the words of Christ—"Do this for a commemoration of Me."¹⁹ As the holy sacrifice of the Mass is the perpetual renewal of Christ's offering upon the cross, so it is never offered by the Church to any one but to God alone, as the Supreme Being and Author of life and death. No saint, no angel, not even the Mother of God has any part in the Mass, except as a matter of honoring their names, and of praising God for their glory; it is the sole great sacrifice of the eternal Son of God to His own eternal Father. Listen to what St. Augustine says on this matter. "We do not build temples, and ordain priests, rites, and sacrifices for the martyrs, for they are not our gods, but their God is our God. Certainly we honor their reliquaries, as the memorials of holy men of God who strove for the truth even to the death of their bodies, that the true religion might be made known, and false and fictitious religions exposed. But who ever heard of a priest of the faithful, stand-

¹⁹ Luke xxii. 19.

ing at an altar built for the honor and worship of God over the holy body of some martyr, say in the prayers, I offer to thee a sacrifice, O Peter, or O Paul, or O Cyprian? for it is to God that sacrifices are offered at their tombs—the God who made them both men and martyrs, and associated them with holy angels in celestial honor; and the reason why we pay such honors to their memory is that by doing so we may both give thanks to the true God for their victories, and, by recalling them afresh to remembrance, we stir ourselves up to imitate them by seeking to obtain like crowns and palms, calling to our help that same God on whom they called.”²⁰

The sacrifice of the Mass is offered for the same motives or ends as that of the cross, namely, to adore God, to thank Him for all His graces and favors, and for the sins of the living and for the souls in purgatory.

In the Mass Christ renews the mysteries of His Passion, of His Resurrection, and of His Ascension. The Church, divinely guided, puts forth the following prayer in the Canon by the lips of the celebrating priest—this prayer immediately follows the repetition of Christ’s injunction: “As often as ye shall do these things, do them in remembrance of Me”—: “Wherefore, O Lord, we Thy servants, as also Thy holy people, calling to mind the blessed passion of the same Christ Thy Son, our Lord, His resurrection from hell, and glorious ascension into heaven, offer unto Thy most excellent Majesty, of Thy gifts and grants a pure Host, a holy Host, an immaculate Host, the holy bread of eternal life, and the chalice of everlasting salvation.”²¹ We have, therefore, in the Mass the assemblage of all the mysteries of the passion, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ into heaven,

²⁰ St. Aug., “The City of God,” Book VIII. chap. 27.

²¹ Canon of the Mass.

as well as the continuation of them until the end of the world. Again St. Augustine says: "Our true Mediator of God and man, whilst as God He receives sacrifice together with the Father, being God like to Him, chose, as man, rather to be the Sacrifice than to receive it, lest any one should draw the conclusion even here that sacrifice was to be offered to a creature. Thus He is at once the Priest, who offers Himself, and He is the oblation. He willed that this mystery should be the daily sacrifice of the Church; as the body of which He is the Head, the Church learns through Him to offer herself up to God." ²²

Caiphas, the chief justice, who tried Christ in that infamous trial, prophesied thus to his fellow judges: "Neither do you consider that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." ²³ This unwilling prophecy was made to show the necessity or expediency of Christ's sacrifice on the cross to satisfy the justice of God and to save the human race from eternal death. In the beginning God had warned Adam, as the head of the human race: "Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat. For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death." ²⁴ And as Adam sinned by breaking this command, Christ atoned for it by being nailed to the tree of the cross. Again, Christ died to lessen our fear of death. St. Paul says He died that "He might deliver them, who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to servitude." ²⁵ And he exhorts us: "For in that he died to sin, he died once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. So do you also reckon, that you are dead to sin, but alive in God, in Christ Jesus our Lord." ²⁶ He sacrifices

²² St. Aug., "The City of God," Book X. chap. 20.

²³ John xi. 50.

²⁴ Gen. ii. 17.

²⁵ Heb. ii. 15.

²⁶ Rom. vi. 10, 11.

Himself in order to triumph—that triumph was His glorious resurrection, which gives us the hope and the pledge of our happy resurrection in God's own time.

It is of divine faith that Christ died for all men—no one is excepted from the atoning power of the sacrifice He offered upon the cross. But this general redemption requires application to individual souls; we have to correspond in one way or another with that great sacrifice. The great means for this application of the sacrifice of Calvary is in the sacrifice of the Mass, for through the Mass we obtain the fruits of Calvary. By it the Church militant—on earth—obtains all graces and helps in her fight against the world; the Church suffering—in purgatory—gains relief and pardon; the Church triumphant—in heaven—gets joy and glory. Take the Mass out of the Church, and you abolish the very reason of her existence. Around the Mass are gathered all the angels and saints, for in it and by it, and of it, is all holiness and sanctity. In the Canon the priest prays that God “to us sinners . . . would vouchsafe to grant some part and fellowship with thy holy apostles and martyrs . . . and with all Thy saints; into whose company we beseech Thee to admit us, not considering our merits, but freely pardoning our offenses through Christ our Lord, by whom, O Lord, Thou dost always create, sanctify, quicken, bless and give us all these good things. Through Him, and with Him, and in Him is to Thee God, the Father almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory forever and ever.”²⁷

No wonder that the grandest cathedrals and churches ever planned by the mind and erected by the handicraft of man were builded, and are being builded, around the sacrificial altar on which Christ yet immolates Himself. The greatest geniuses of the human race have vied with one another in painting, in archi-

²⁷ Canon of the Mass.

ecture, in glasswork, in bronze, in wood, in music, in all the arts and crafts, to build and beautify the house of God and make it, as far as possible, worthy of the great sacrifice. Take the altar out of the most beautiful church, and you have a monstrosity; put the altar in the humblest cabin, and you have the house of God. If Jacob, after having seen God in Bethel, tremblingly said: "How terrible is this place! this is no other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven;" and "he took the stone, which he had laid under his head, and set it up for a title, pouring oil upon the top of it"²⁸—with what greater truth and more ardent love can we use the words of David: "How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts: My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God"?²⁹ If, when Solomon the son of David dedicated his glorious temple to God, "fire came down from heaven, and consumed the holocausts and the victims; and the majesty of the Lord filled the house. Neither could the priests enter the temple of the Lord, because the majesty of the Lord had filled the temple of the Lord"³⁰—what are we to think, how are we to act, when the eternal Son of God comes upon our altars to renew the tremendous sacrifice of the cross?

The answer to these questions is found in the beautiful words of St. Augustine: "Let the tabernacle of our heart be found swept clean of vices and filled with virtues. Let it be locked to the devil, and thrown open to Christ. Yea, let us so work, that we may be able to open the door to the kingdom of heaven with the key of good works. For even as evil works are so many bolts and bars to close against us the entrance into life, so beyond doubt are good works the key thereto."³¹

²⁸ Gen. xxviii. 17, 18.

²⁹ Ps. lxxxiii. 2, 3.

³⁰ Paral. vii. 1, 2.

³¹ St. Aug. Ser. 252.

If one could speak with the tongue of an archangel, he would not be able to tell the wonders of the Mass, for, as I have said already, it is the sacrifice of God to God. St. Thomas Aquinas says: "In one Mass is found all the fruit which Christ gained upon the cross. Whatever is the effect of Christ's Passion is also the effect of this sacrifice."³² The Mass is, therefore, the most holy of all works, the most pleasing to God; it takes away His anger from the sins of men, and to it is attached the world's salvation; from it flow all the graces, all the blessings, and all the favors of God to the Church in general and to each member individually. As the heart is to the body, so is the Mass to the Church; as the compass to the mariner, so is the Mass to each one of us upon the stormy ocean of life; as the anchor is to the ship, so is the Mass in a turbulent, fluctuating world. "Although there never was a sacrifice in all history, before Christ, that fully corresponded with what a sacrifice in its absolute sense could be, Catholic theology has no difficulty, now that the Word is made Flesh, in recognizing what such an absolute sacrifice must be, and is. Honor and expiation by a visible offering, accompanied most frequently by blood, are the elements we find in history. In Christ's sacrifice we find: first, the most august and awful external act of oblation and immolation; next, the internal Act of the Will of an Infinite Person; thirdly, the explicit recognition to the full degree that God is man's supreme Lord; fourthly, the virtual substitution of the Divine Victim for the human race; fifthly, the paying of a ransom, absolutely sufficient and superabundant; sixthly, the personal expiation of all possible guilt; and, lastly, the impetration, or the securing by intercession, of the divine benignity in all its width and

³² Chap. VI. On Isaias, Lesson V.

depth.”³³ This is the teaching of the Church on the holy sacrifice of the Mass, so that it is not merely a representation of the Action of Calvary—it is the Action itself repeated and renewed.

The whole life of Christ leads up to His sacrificial action on the cross; all the steps of the Passion, the Agony in the garden, the scourging at the pillar, the crowning with thorns, the carrying of the cross, are a series of acts ending with the last cry: “It is consummated.”³⁴ No wonder, then, that the life of the Church is bound up in the Mass; no wonder that she surrounds it with such care, veneration, and love; no wonder that she cries to the Blessed Trinity: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest.”³⁵

But now let us see what the Church commands us to do in reference to this great sacrificial action. “All the faithful having the use of reason are bound under pain of mortal sin to be present at Mass on all Sundays and holydays of obligation. The reason why the precept binds so gravely is because of the gravity of the matter, the common belief of the faithful, and the unanimous teaching of theologians.”³⁶

To properly hear Mass are required presence of body and attention of mind. The presence of body means that the person must assist at the sacrifice in such a way that he is morally joined with the priest who offers it. He need not see him, for blind persons are bound to hear Mass; nor need he hear him, for the deaf are equally bound; and even those who have sight and hearing may not see or hear the priest, by reason of distance or some other impediment; nevertheless, if they hear the sound of the bell, or the chanting of the choir, or know the principal parts of the Mass

³³ Hedley, “The Holy Eucharist,” p. 156.

³⁴ John xix. 30.

³⁵ Preface of the Mass.

³⁶ Sabetti-Barrett, “Theol. Moral.” 27th ed.

from what the people who are gathered at it are doing, they are then said to hear Mass and fulfil the obligation.

The Church intends and wishes that all should be present at the entire Mass, and it depends on how much of this great sacrifice is omitted whether the sin be venial or mortal. She herself has not exactly determined how much of the Mass must be omitted in order to constitute a mortal sin, but allows her theologians to teach certain things in this matter, and acquiesces in their conclusions. According to the common opinion of theologians, it is probably not a mortal sin to be absent from Mass up to and including the Gospel, although the great theologian and doctor of the Church, St. Alphonsus Liguori, does not hold this opinion; that is, he holds it as a mortal sin to be absent from the beginning and including the Gospel. According to all theologians, it is a grave sin to omit all that goes before the Gospel, and all after the priest's Communion. It is a grave sin to omit the Canon of the Mass from the Consecration to the Paternoster. It is also grave to omit the Consecration and the Communion of the priest, or even to omit the Consecration alone.

“The precept of hearing Mass is satisfied by the person who is present at the sacrifice in whatsoever Catholic rite it is celebrated,”³⁷ for the Mass is celebrated with several rites, and in several languages. It is not so much a prayer, as it is an action, and the sacrificial action is the same in all, namely, everything tends to, and surrounds the Consecration. It is not a prayer-meeting, nor can it be measured by length of time, though, of course, it takes time to perform the action; it is essentially a sacrifice, and priest and people are joined in its offering. It is most beautifully described thus by Cardinal Newman: “It

³⁷ Canon 1249.

is not a mere form of words—it is a great action, the greatest action that can be on earth. It is not the invocation merely, but, if I dare use the word, the evocation of the Eternal. He becomes present on the altar in flesh and blood, before whom angels bow and devils tremble. This is that awful event which is the scope and the interpretation of every part of the solemnity. Words are necessary, but as means, not as ends; they are not mere addresses to the throne of grace, they are instruments of what is far higher, of consecration, of sacrifice. They hurry on, as if impatient to fulfil their mission. Quickly they go, the whole is quick, for they are all parts of one integral action. Quickly they go, for they are awful words of sacrifice, they are a work too great to delay upon, as when it was said in the beginning, ‘What thou doest, do quickly.’ Quickly they pass, for the Lord Jesus goes with them, as He passed along the lake in the days of His flesh, quickly calling first one and then another; quickly they pass, because as the lightning which shineth from one part of the heavens unto the other, so is the coming of the Son of Man. Quickly they pass, for they are as the words of Moses, when the Lord came down in the cloud, calling on the name of the Lord as he passed by, ‘The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.’ And as Moses on the mountain, so we too make ‘haste and bow our heads to the earth, and adore.’ So we, all around, each in his place, look for the great Advent, ‘waiting for the moving of the water’ each in his place with his own heart, with his own wants, with his own thoughts, with his own intentions, with his own prayers, separate but concordant, watching what is going on, watching its progress, uniting in its consummation; not painfully and hopelessly, following a hard form of prayer from beginning to end, but, like a

concert of musical instruments, each different, but concurring in a sweet harmony, we take our part with God's priest, supporting him, yet guided by him. There are little children there, and old men, and simple laborers, and students in seminaries, priests preparing for Mass, priests making their thanksgiving; there are innocent maidens, and there are penitent sinners; but out of all these many minds rises one Eucharistic hymn, and the great action is the measure and the scope of it." ³⁸

From the earliest times there were always some ceremonials attached to sacrifice, and these varied according to time and circumstance, but from the Last Supper until now the Great Action itself of sacrifice has never been touched, nor can it be. In the whole world there is not now, nor ever has been, action so inspiring, no pageantry so imposing, no grandeur so impressive as that of a solemn Papal or Pontifical Mass. The sublimity of the setting, the inspiration of the whole action, with its music, its lights, its celebrant and ministers, has no counterpart on any other stage of the world. It is a forecast of the wonders seen by blessed John the Divine, and described by him in the Apocalypse, and is intended by God to raise our hearts and our souls beyond the passing things and tinsel of this world. "Behold a door was opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard, as it were, of a trumpet speaking with me, said: Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must be done hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit; and behold there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne was One sitting. And He that sat, was to the sight like the jasper and the sardine-stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats four and twenty

³⁸ Newman, "Loss and Gain," p. 290.

ancients sitting, clothed in white garments, and on their heads were crowns of gold. . . . And I, John, saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and He will dwell with them.”³⁹

To properly hear Mass, not only is presence of body required, but also attention of mind, so that it is not enough to be present bodily—one must assist at it with the intention of hearing it and of giving sufficient attention to what is being done. A man might be bodily present at Mass and be asleep, but he would not fulfil the obligation, neither would those who speak, or look around them, or so conduct themselves as to pay no attention to the sacrifice. Attention at Mass may be either internal or external: internal attention is when a person applies the mind to what is being done by the priest, namely, to his words and actions, or to their meaning; external attention is raising the mind to God Himself by prayer and meditation.

The best way to assist with attention at the holy sacrifice is to read the prayers at Mass which are found in every prayer-book, and to keep with the priest at the different parts, as he goes through them, or to say the rosary during the whole Mass, meditating upon the different mysteries. It is astounding how many people come to Mass, to this most wonderful sacrifice of the New Law, unprovided with a prayer-book or a rosary. The consequence is that they gape around, are distracted by many things, pay very little attention to the great action, say very few prayers, and go away as empty as they came. To hear Mass with the desire of going away from it better than we came is to attend it with the intention of honoring God, with love and gratitude

³⁹ Apoc. iv. 1-4; xxi. 2, 3.

to Jesus Christ for having given it to us, with a wish to be immolated and offered up with the most sacred Victim, and to be sorry for sin. To be wilfully distracted during Mass, to allow freely thoughts of the outside world and of its vanities to dwell in the mind, is to be almost like to the soldiers who gambled at the foot of the cross for the clothing of the holy Victim who was dying above their heads. Think when at Mass of what it cost Jesus Christ to give it to us; think of His love, notwithstanding the coldness, ingratitude, and sinfulness of men, imagine yourself at the foot of the cross and conduct yourself as if you were really there, for this is Calvary over again to the eye of the man of faith. The best means of exciting this devotion is to remember your spiritual and temporal wants, and then to think of the infinite goodness of our Lord and Saviour. Each one of us should have upon his lips and in his heart the prayer of Bartimeus, the blind man of Jericho whom Jesus healed. The touching story is told in the tenth chapter of St. Mark's Gospel. As Jesus "went out of Jericho with His disciples and a very great multitude, Bartimeus the blind man, the son of Timeus, sat by the wayside begging, who when he had heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, began to cry out and to say: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus, standing still, commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying to him: Be of better comfort: arise, He calleth thee. Who casting off his garment leaped up, and came to Him. And Jesus answering said to him: What wilt thou that I should do to thee? And the blind man said to Him: Rabboni, that I may see. And Jesus saith to him: Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole." ⁴⁰

And so it is in the Mass; Jesus of Nazareth is passing by, and we are like the blind man of Jericho.

⁴⁰ Mark x. 46-52.

“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me,” should be on our lips and in our hearts. We are blind to our faults, and weaknesses, and our sins; we cannot, or at least do not, see ourselves, and we should cry out to the Light of the world to open our eyes that we may see the truth as it is in God. Jesus says at Mass to each one of us: “What wilt thou that I should do to thee?” and what is our answer? Is it the answer of the blind man, “Rabboni, that I may see”? See my faults, see my failings, see my sins, and be sorry for them, and amend them?

If you go to Mass through mere routine, if you rush in and hurry out, what can you expect? The Lord is waiting to bless you, but you will have to ask Him, for He will not force Himself upon you. You can come empty and go away filled, or you can come empty and go away as you came, or even worse. Consider all the different classes who come to Mass, the good, the bad, the indifferent. As in the days of His earthly life Jesus was surrounded by these same classes, so is He now. As in the days of His earthly life He received all who came to Him for advice, and comfort, and pardon, so does He now. As He immolated and sacrificed Himself upon the bloody cross of Calvary, so does He now repeat and apply that sacrifice in the Mass. He speaks to each of us in the words of “The Imitation of Christ: “As I, with hands outstretched on the cross and body naked, offered Myself to God My Father freely for your sins, so that there was nothing left in Me which did not wholly pass into a sacrifice, appeasing God, so in the Mass you too should give yourself willingly to Me for a pure and holy offering every day, with all your powers and affections, as interiorly as you can. What more do I ask of you than to try to give yourself entirely up to Me? What you give Me else I care not; I do not ask your gifts, but you. Just as it would not be enough for you if you

had all but Me, so Me it cannot please, whatever you give, if you offer not yourself.”⁴¹ We should come to Mass with souls purified from sin and with a sincere sorrow for sin. We must leave the world outside, with its frivolities, its falsehoods, its crimes. We take the holy water and sign ourselves with the sign of the cross at the door of the church, to cleanse our souls from the dross of sin and give us strength to participate holily in the great mystery. We must have charity, which is the love of God and of our neighbor, in our hearts if we wish to have the Mass applied to our souls. Christ does not want anything from us if we have rancor, hatred, uncharitableness and sin of any kind in our hearts, nor will we get anything from Him. He Himself says: “If thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother; and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift.”⁴² Your gift is your heart, and if your heart is bad, your gift is an insult, for the Mass is a sacrifice of peace and reconciliation with God and our fellow-man.

As I have said already, all persons who have attained the use of reason are obliged under the penalty of mortal sin to attend Mass on all Sundays and holydays of obligation. No one without a grave excuse is exempt—cardinals down to the youngest seminarian; kings, queens, presidents of republics, down to the poorest workman or the meanest beggar; the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned—all are equally bound by the common law. Those who are in charge of children, or of any other persons, and who keep them away from the holy sacrifice without a sufficient reason, are guilty of mortal sin every time they do so and for every person whom they keep away. It goes without

⁴¹ “Imitation of Christ,” Book III., chap. 8.

⁴² Matt. v. 23, 24.

saying that there are reasons allowed by the Church for not attending Mass. The Church is a kind and loving mother, and all her laws are for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God upon earth and for the salvation of its members. She excuses, then, from hearing Mass all those who are hindered by physical or moral impossibility. Those who cannot attend by reason of sickness, infirmity, or convalescence; if there is a doubt, let a conscientious physician, or nurse, or some prudent person, or the pastor be consulted; also nurses and those who are in charge of the sick, and cannot leave them, are not bound to hear Mass. Moral impossibility is where a grievous loss or grievous inconvenience, whether spiritual or temporal, to oneself or others, would result from attendance at Mass. Mothers who have small children or babies, and have no one to whom they can leave them, are excused; the husband is bound to help his wife in this grave matter, and if possible care for the children whilst she is at Mass or take turns if there is only one Mass in the place. It is not sufficient excuse to stay at home to prepare food, or guard the house when there is more than one Mass in the parish, and the members of the family can go to one or other of the Masses. Workmen are excused who cannot leave their work without grave harm to themselves or to their employers. Persons who are continually employed so that they cannot go to Mass are bound to seek other employment, if possible, equally as remunerative, where they can fulfil this grave obligation, and employers are bound to arrange matters so that those who work for them may not be continually absent from Mass. The desecration of Sunday is growing apace in this country, and indeed throughout the world, and it behoves Catholics to insist on their rights—the right of every man to worship God as his conscience directs, and to have the time and leisure in which to do so. For there are

many here who would abolish the Mass altogether and do all in their power to keep men and women away from it; they know well that it is the Mass that keeps us together and makes us one body in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The distance from the church, or from where Mass is said, enters into the reason of excuse from it, but it must be borne well in mind that no certain rule can be absolutely made in this matter. We have to view the surroundings of persons, places, and times before a judgment can be made and a real excuse given. In cities and towns no excuse of distance can really be given, unless it were raining, snowing, or so cold that delicate persons and children could not go out. And even in the country, what was a long distance some time ago is now shortened by reason of electric cars and other conveyances. Let us quote a priest who writes very appropriately on this matter: "There are many," he says, "who hold themselves too lightly excused in this matter. We have known Catholics, living ten, twelve, and fourteen miles from a church, who scarcely ever heard Mass, yet gave their consciences no uneasiness on this head. They frequently went the same and greater distances on worldly business, but rarely came to Mass, because it was a matter in which their soul alone was concerned. I have known, again, those living the same or greater distances, who scarcely ever missed Mass on Sunday. The difference was one of faith and zeal, and an exemplification of the old axiom, 'Where there is a will there is a way.'"⁴³

Again, how can Catholics settle in a place where there are no priest, no church, no Catholic school? They cannot go to Mass even if they would, nor can they give their children a Catholic education. No wonder that many are lost to the faith on this account

⁴³ Roche, "The Obligation of Hearing Mass," p. 90.

alone. Lastly, many Catholics during summer vacation go to places where they cannot hear Mass, or at least will not do so, by reason of the alleged inconvenience of distance. There is no valid excuse, for there are many places just as beautiful and as healthy as where they go, in which they can fulfil their obligation of hearing Mass.

And what shall I say in reference to the practise of hearing Mass daily? Thanks be to God that this beautiful and soul-saving habit is growing stronger day by day and more wide-spread. If we believe what has been said already of the Mass, the oftener we hear it the better for ourselves. St. Francis de Sales says: "Make every effort to assist daily at the Mass in order that with the priest you may offer up the holy sacrifice to your Redeemer, to God, His Father, for yourselves and for the whole Church." There are many persons who, by a little economy of time, could go daily to Mass. Some fritter away their time on vain, frivolous things or spend it engrossed in things of the world. They seem to act and think as if religion were a matter only for Sundays, whereas it is life itself. They rush and hurry and bustle every day; some never go to Mass at all and in the end it all vanishes like smoke and they have nothing to offer to God. If at all possible come to the daily Mass; it will prepare you for the struggles and temptations of the day; it will quiet your mind and strengthen your resolutions. Morning by morning you can go up the Mount of Transfiguration and say, as Peter did of old: "Lord, it is good for us to be here,"⁴⁴ and can adore Him as Peter, James, and John did when "He was transfigured before them. And His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as snow,"⁴⁵ for He is the same now as then. Oh! you cannot measure the benefits, and the peace, and the comfort of the daily Mass. The saints

⁴⁴ Matt. xvii. 4.

⁴⁵ Matt. xvii. 2.

loved to say or hear Mass every day, and that is the reason why they are saints. Today, not only the poor and socially unknown, but the richest and most exalted in society, the leaders in finance, in business, in government, the most learned in art, in physics, in science, in army and navy—all find time to go to the daily Mass. It is the greatest leveler of worldly distinctions, for all meet at the sacrifice, “where there is neither Gentile nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all in all.”⁴⁶

If Mass were said but once a year, what a wonder and a mercy of God it would be! But it is said every moment of the day, “from the rising of the sun even to the going down,” and it is said for the healing of the world’s wounds. St. John Chrysostom beautifully expounding this thought from his cathedral pulpit in Constantinople, long, long ago, said: “If there are no wounds, then neither are remedies necessary. Therefore, Christ enjoined that the sacrifice should be always offered up on account of weakness, and that it should take place as a commemoration of sins. What then? Do we not offer up sacrifice day by day? We do, indeed, but we commemorate His death. This sacrifice is one, not many. How one and not many? Because it was once offered up, just as that one sacrifice in the holy of holies. This is a type of that, and that of the other. We are ever offering up the same Person.”⁴⁷

The best way possible to hear Mass is to be an actual participator of the Holy Eucharist. In all sacrificial acts, even among the pagans, the priests and the people partook of the sacrifice by eating some part of it. This custom was handed down from the beginning of man on the earth, and was always regarded as an in-

⁴⁶ Col. iii. 11.

⁴⁷ Homily on Ep. to Heb. xvii.

dispensable part of the sacrifice itself. And so the sacrifice of the New Law is not complete unless the Victim is consumed by the sacrificer; thus it comes about that the people who are co-offerers of the Mass with the priest ought also to receive the Victim with him. In this way they enter into true communion with Christ, and with the sacrifice, by actually receiving His body and blood. Our Lord taught us to say: "Give us this day our daily bread," and commentators on these words refer them primarily to the daily bread of the Holy Eucharist. Hear what St. Augustine says on this petition of the Lord's Prayer: "The fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer is," he says, "give us this day our daily bread. Our daily bread stands either for all those things which go to support our physical life and in teaching us concerning them. Our Lord said, 'Be not solicitous for tomorrow,' for that daily bread was added with a purpose; or for the sacrament of Christ's body, which we receive every day; or for the spiritual food, of which the same Lord said, 'Labor not for the meat which perisheth,' and again, 'I am the living Bread which came down from heaven.'" ⁴⁸ As we need food every day in order to sustain the life of the body, so we need this heavenly food to sustain the life of the soul. We change the food and drink into our own substance by the process of digestion. Christ changes us to the likeness of Himself by means of His body and blood. St. Cyril of Jerusalem exhorts us in these words: "Therefore," he says, "with the fullest assurance let us partake as of the body and blood of Christ: for in the figure of bread is given to thee His body, and in the figure of wine His blood; that thou by partaking of the body and blood of Christ mightest be made of the same body and the same blood with Him. For thus we come to bear Christ in us, because His body and

⁴⁸ Euarratio on Ps. xxxiii. 6.

blood are diffused through our members; thus it is that, according to the blessed Peter, we become partakers of the divine nature.”⁴⁹ This is why each of us should say with the priest in the Mass: “May Thy body, O Lord, which I have received, and thy blood, which I have drunk, cleave to my bowels; and grant that no stain of sin may remain in me, who have been refreshed with pure and holy sacraments.”⁵⁰

Oh! if besides hearing Mass we become partakers of the sacrifice as Jesus Christ intended, then indeed do we crown the work, then do we begin the day well, and He will be with us all the time. Then indeed we can truly say with the writer of “The Imitation of Christ”: “Rejoice, my soul, and give thanks to God for such a noble gift, for such a special comfort left thee in this valley of tears! Therefore, ever with renewal of mind, thou shouldst dispose thyself for this, and ponder with thought intent on the great mystery of salvation. It should seem as great, as new, as sweet to thee, when you celebrate or hear Mass, as if the same day Christ descending into the Virgin’s womb, was made man; or, hanging on the cross suffered and died for man’s salvation.”⁵¹

If persons cannot go every day to Mass or holy Communion, they should go as often as possible, and when they cannot really receive the Holy Eucharist they ought to receive it spiritually. St. Thomas again says: “Spiritual communion includes the wish or desire of receiving this sacrament.”⁵² However, it is not enough to hunger for or desire food and drink if we wish to live; we must actually eat and drink. And therefore if we wish to live in God’s love and friendship, we must actually come to the Lord’s table with a lively faith, a firm hope, and an ardent charity; in that

⁴⁹ Catechetical Lectures, Lect. XXII. 3.

⁵⁰ Ablution Prayer.

⁵¹ Book IV. chap. 2.

⁵² Pars. III.—q. LXXX. 3.

way will we become incorporated with the body of Christ.

“What shall we say,” says Father Faber, “of that two-fold wonder, the sacrifice of the Mass and the sacrament of Communion? There the Precious Blood puts on the vesture of omnipresence, and it becomes it well. Multiplied by many hundreds of thousands of times is it not dwelling, whole, living, and glorified, in the hosts received within the tabernacles of the world? Into how many thousand human hearts does it not descend daily, whole, living, and glorified, in the glory of the dread reality of Communion? Into how many thousand chalices does it not empty itself from out the Sacred Heart in heaven every day? The very whirling of the earth, as it makes day and night by turning to or from the sun, ministers to the longings of the Precious Blood. It is bewildering to think of the countless graces of expiation which flow daily from the sacrifice, or the countless graces of union which flow daily from the sacrament. This is the great laboratory in which the Precious Blood makes holiness.”⁵³

Let St. Cyril of Jerusalem give the final exhortation. “Hold fast these traditions unspotted, and keep yourselves free from offense. Sever not yourselves from the Communion; deprive not yourselves by the pollution of sins of these holy and spiritual mysteries. And may the God of peace Himself sanctify you in all things, that your whole spirit, and soul, and body, may be preserved blameless in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,⁵⁴ to whom be glory and honor and might, with the Father and the Holy Spirit now and ever, and world without end. Amen.”⁵⁵

⁵³ “The Precious Blood,” p. 241.

⁵⁵ “Catechetical Lectures,” XXIII. 19.

⁵⁴ I. Thess. v. 23.

GOD'S MERCY TO SINNERS

“The whole world before Thee is as the least grain of the balance, and as a drop of the morning dew that falleth down upon the earth. But Thou hast mercy upon all, because Thou canst do all things, and overlookest the sins of men for the sake of repentance.” (Wisdom xi. 23, 24.)

SYNOPSIS

God is infinite in all His perfections.—God's love.—We cannot fathom God's love.—Love measured by deeds.—Scripture proving God's love.—The wonders of God's love everywhere.—God's love and mortal sin.—God waits for the sinner.—Presumption is a great sin.—God never changes His estimation of sin.—God hates sin and yet is patient with the sinner.—God makes the first move for reconciliation.—The Good Shepherd.—The lost groat.—The Prodigal Son.—Christ weeps over Jerusalem.—Christ's prayer for all men.—The good and the bad thief.—Love rules the world.—Not to love God is hell.—The joys of heaven.

GOD is infinite in all His perfections, and so is in a plane wholly beyond our finite and limited comprehension. Our minds are so constituted that we must think of Him in parts, and according to the measure of our feeble understanding. We know that He has no qualities, but that He is Himself the quality, and there is nothing in Him that is not infinite. There is no aspect of God which appeals more to us than that of His infinite love. This love is not to be taken in any way like to the feelings that exist between husband and wife, parents and children, friends and friends, or man and his fellow man. God is much more than this—“God is charity.”¹

¹ I. John iv. 16.

What is this charity which St. John, that apostle of love, says God is? It is that love of benevolence and friendship which He manifests to us, to each and every one of us, to the whole human race, every moment of our lives. "In this," says St. John, "we have known the charity of God, because He hath laid down His life for us."² And, again, the same apostle tells us: "By this hath the charity of God appeared towards us, because God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we may live by Him. In this is charity: not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins."³

From this testimony of the great apostle of love we can see that the love of God our Father is beyond and above any love of which we can have any adequate knowledge or conception. It does not wait to be loved first; it does not look for any recompense; it is not confined to any good qualities it may find in its object; it is not bounded by space or time, but is more lavishly poured out upon all men than the sunlight upon all things. "Let us now consider the various forms which friendship takes with the majority of men. One man loves because he is loved; another because he has been honored; another shows a liking for a man who has been of use to him in some practical matter or other; another, again, for some such similar reason; but it is difficult, indeed, to find a man who loves his neighbor thoroughly and as he ought for Christ's sake. For in most cases it is temporal business which brings men together."⁴

If love is to be estimated by deeds rather than by words, God has certainly proved His love for each one of us and for the whole world. He has satisfied the principle of love by the innumerable expressions which

² John iii. 16.

³ John iv. 9, 10.

⁴ St. John Chrys. Hom. on Matt. ix.

are recorded on almost every page of the Old and New Testaments. Away back in the very beginning of our race, just after the fall of our first parents, we have the gracious promise of our Redeemer to come. And these expressions of love and mercy grow stronger and clearer as time goes on, until they culminate in the cross of Calvary.

Listen to what David, the prophet-king of Israel, says of God. "As a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him: for He knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are dust: man's days are as grass, as the flower of the field so shall he flourish. For the spirit shall pass in him, and he shall not be: and he shall know his place no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from eternity and unto eternity upon them that fear Him." ⁵

And again, in the Book of Wisdom, it is written of God: "Thou lovest all things that are, and hatest none of the things which Thou hast made: for Thou didst not appoint or make anything hating it. And how could anything endure if Thou wouldst not? or be preserved if not called by Thee? But Thou sparest all because they are Thine, O Lord, who lovest souls." ⁶

God declares His love for souls; He expostulates with sinners for their ingratitude; ⁷ He delights to be with the children of men.⁸ He says to the sinner: "In a moment of indignation have I hid My face a little while from thee, but with everlasting kindness have I had mercy on thee." ⁹ "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee." ¹⁰ "He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?" ¹¹ "For God

⁵ Ps. cii. 13-17.

⁶ Wis. xi. 25-27.

⁷ Jer. ii. 2.

⁸ Prov. viii. 31.

⁹ Isaias liv. 8.

¹⁰ Jer. xxxi. 3.

¹¹ Rom. viii. 32.

hath not appointed us unto wrath, but unto the purchasing the salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us; that whether we watch or sleep, we may live together with Him.”¹²

Ah, I cannot for want of time even begin to tell you of the many passages in the Scriptures showing forth this overpowering, all-mastering love of God for sinners. Suffice it to say, that from Genesis to the Apocalypse, from the beginning to the end of the Inspired Word, every book of the Old and New Testaments is simply crowded with these expressions and testimonies of our Father's infinite love for His sinful, erring sons. And in the time of our Saviour on earth, His own eternal Son, whom He sent to redeem us from the devil and hell, these expressions of love burst out into the full noonday's light of God's love for sinners. And not only has He given us His word and His pledge, but He has proven that He loves us by His actions.

Let us look around and see how everything in the natural order has been created for man's use and benefit. See the world filled with vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual life. See the wonders of God's creation, not only on the earth and in the waters, but in the heavens above. Behold the wonders of God superabundantly set forth from the tiniest microbe that can be seen under only the most powerful glass up to the giant mammoth; from the grain of sand on the seashore to the immense orbs that circle in the skies; the unfathomable distances in which they roll, and the wonders of the light they give; truly do the works of God show forth His wonderful love and glory, and “the firmament declareth the work of His hands.”¹³ And He has given us a soul capable of knowing all this, thereby capable of knowing and of loving Him. “Know ye that the Lord He is God: He made us and

¹² I. Thess. v. 9, 10.

¹³ Ps. xviii. 2.

not we ourselves.”¹⁴ He has fashioned this soul that nothing will satisfy it but Him, “for Thou madest us for Thyself, O God, and our heart is restless until it repose in Thee,” says St. Augustine.¹⁵ And the same great saint truly says again: “Our rational nature is so great a good that there is no good wherein we can be happy save God,”¹⁶ and He has given us a body wonderful in its mechanism. He has brought us into the world at the time and in the environment most favorable for the development of both soul and body. He does not stand apart from us, indifferent and neglecting, but watches over us every moment of our lives, each individual of us, as if no one else ever lived, or now lives, except us. On every individual of His creation He dwells with pleasure and love, on every one of them does He bestow His favors: natural favors to those that are of the natural order and supernatural favors on those that are of the supernatural order. In the Book of Wisdom it is said of Him: “Thou openest Thy hand, and filleth every creature with blessing.”¹⁷ Not only has He shown His love in creation, but also in the continual conservation and preservation of all things, and has adapted them from their very beginning up to the time when we can use them as food and clothing, and for other uses and benefits.

And when we pass from the natural to the supernatural order the wonders of God's love for us increase. It is eternal, for we have always been present to His infinite mind. It never changes, but is always constant, unchanged even when we have abandoned Him by deliberate mortal sin, and always even then bestowing blessings upon us. It has nothing to gain in return, for we have nothing and can do nothing, and any good that is in us He gives to us. Finally, He loves us in-

¹⁴ Ps. xcix. 3.

¹⁵ Conf. Book I. No. I.

¹⁶ De Nat. Boni. c. 7.

¹⁷ Wis. xi. 25.

dividually, as if each of us were the only person alive. He loves the meanest and most contemptible man in the world with an everlasting love, above anything of which we have any conception. For us He gave His only and well-beloved Son; for us Jesus Christ our Saviour came on earth, lived in poverty and deprivation, and died as a malefactor upon the cross of shame. He has taught us that God is love, and is our Father. He has given us precepts of love; He has made the way to heaven easier by both precept and example; He has offered His merits in place of our sins; He has given us the Sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist.

Created love is selfish for the most part, or useless, aye, even hurtful; it is changeable, fickle, and is seldom able to do even the good it desires. The love of God produces all good, all happiness; it enriches, gratifies, glorifies. Should God withdraw His love from us all virtue, all excellence, all happiness, all hope would be gone. He is continually pouring out upon us His graces and blessings every hour of the day and every day of our lives. And all this is done out of pure bounty, love, and liberality. And yet He sees our meanness and littleness and sinfulness, and He does not cease to love us. "When we had fallen away, Thou didst raise us up again and didst not cease doing all things, until Thou hadst brought us up to heaven and given unto us freely Thy future kingdom."¹⁸

Oh, the wonderful, unspeakable love of God! What can we say; what can the highest archangel say of His love and mercy? We are as nothing in His sight. He needs us not, and yet He loves us, notwithstanding our sins, our unfaithfulness, our ingratitude. God "will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth,"¹⁹ and this is not a mere desire on His part, with results that may or may not be, but is

¹⁸ St. John Chrys. in I. Cor. Hom. XXIV. 3.

¹⁹ I. Tim. ii. 4.

His serious, decided, and effectual will. It is contrary to His will to abandon the most worthless human being that ever lived, and no man during his mortal life is ever forsaken by God. Every moment He is speaking with loving and warning voice to the most hardened sinner.

“There are some thoughts which, however old, are always new, either because they are so broad that we never learn them thoroughly or because they are so intensely practical that their interest is always fresh. Such thoughts are for the most part very common thoughts. They are so large and so tall that they are obvious to all capacities, like the huge mountains that are visible from the plain. They require no peculiar keenness of vision; for no one can fail to perceive them. Now, among such thoughts we may reckon that thought, which all children know, that God loves every one of us with a special love. It is one of the commonest thoughts in religion, and yet so amazing that, when we come to look steadily at it we come nigh to not believing it. God does not look at us merely in the mass and multitude. As we shall stand single and alone before His judgment-seat, so do we stand, so have we always stood, single and alone, before the eye of His boundless love. This is what each man has to believe of himself: From all eternity God determined to create me, not simply a fresh man, not simply the son of my parents, a new inhabitant of my native country, an additional soul of this century. But He resolved to create me, such as I am, the me by which I am myself, the me by which other people know me, a different me from any that have ever been created hitherto and from any that will be created hereafter. Unnumbered possible creatures, which God saw when He chose me, He left to remain in their nothingness. They might have worshipped Him a thousand times better than I shall ever worship Him. They might have been

higher, holier, and more interesting. But there was some nameless thing about me which He preferred. His love fastened on something special in me. It was just me, with my individual peculiarities, the size, shape, fashion and way of my particular, single, unmated soul, which in the calmness of His eternal predilection drew Him to create me. I should not believe that God was God if I did not believe this. This is the profession of faith which each of us should make in our hearts.”²⁰

Oh! if we only knew the enormity of deliberate mortal sin. If we could fathom the depth of the insult it offers to God. If we only knew how God hates sin, for He is infinitely holy. If we only knew what it is actually to defy Him when we sin, then we might be able to measure His patience with us.

What do we do when we sin? There are some, maybe present with us now, who do not ponder sufficiently on what a person does when he commits a mortal sin: “He hath stretched out his hand against God, and hath strengthened himself against the Almighty.”²¹ If you will stop for a moment and think, this is practically what the sinner does, for no man can sin mortally unless he knows fully what he is doing. Imagine then me defying God. Imagine yourself doing the same thing. “In Him we live and move and are.”²² We owe everything to Him, and we use these very things to defy Him. A moment's reflection should show us how ungrateful and shameful this is.

And God waits, waits, and yet waits for years and years, hoping, hoping, and yet hoping for the return of the sinner, and for the pardon He is only too willing to give. But this very patience of God is abused and used as an excuse for further sinning. Because He does not strike the sinner dead, or at least visit him

²⁰ Faber, “Spiritual Conferences,” p. 377.

²¹ Job xv. 25.

²² Acts xvii. 28.

with some immediate, visible, terrible punishment, he begins to grow bolder and persuades himself that sin is not so bad or so horrible after all. Let each one of you ask yourself if you have ever really thought of this. Have you ever used the patience of God to keep on in sin, and to make little of it, in the face of all He has told you? In this way you act as if you did not believe that God meant what He said, but only as it were to frighten you. Have you ever thought in that way? This is what the inspired preacher in the Old Law says on this point: "Say not: I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me, for the Most High is a patient rewarder. Be not without fear about sin forgiven, and add not sin upon sin. And say not: the mercy of the Lord is great, He will have mercy on the multitude of my sins. For mercy and wrath come quickly from Him, and His wrath looketh upon sinners. Delay not to be converted to the Lord and defer it not from day to day."²³ St. Augustine very beautifully and truly speaks thus on this sin of presumption: "The Lord is gentle, the Lord is long-suffering, the Lord is pitiful; but the Lord is also just, the Lord is also true. He bestows on thee space for correction; but thou lovest the delay of judgment more than the amendment of thy ways. Hast thou been a bad man yesterday? Today be a good man. Hast thou gone on in thy wickedness today? At any rate change tomorrow. Thou art always expecting and from the mercy of God makest exceeding great promises to thyself. As if He, who has promised thee pardon through repentance, promised thee also a longer life, how knowest thou what tomorrow may bring forth? Rightly thou sayest in thy heart: When I shall have corrected my ways, God will put all my sins away. We cannot deny that God has promised pardon to those who have amended their ways and are converted.

²³ Ecclus. v. 4-8.

For in what prophet thou readest to me that God has promised pardon to him that amends, thou dost not read to me that God has promised thee a long life." ²⁴ Again, the inspired writer says: "Because sentence is not speedily pronounced against the evil, the children of men commit evils without any fear." ²⁵

Listen to what St. John Chrysostom says: "Tarry not to turn to the Lord, yea, defer not your repentance from day to day, for you know not what the morrow may bring forth. In delay there is danger and terror, but where there is no delay, there health is safe and secure.

"Live well then, and then, however young you die, you will die safely; and if you come to old age, you will depart without vexation or trouble; and you will have a double happiness, in that you will be leaving all the evils of life and in that you have lived well.

"Say not: There will be a time meet for repentance, for such words as these do greatly rouse the anger of God. He has promised you eternal ages and you are not willing to work in this present life, which is so short and so fleeting. Do you so idly and so loosely carry yourself, as though the life which you seek were a shorter life than this? Do not daily feasting, daily gluttonies, daily uncleanness, shows, and riches bear witness to the undying nature of sinful cravings?

"Think it well over, that as often as you commit uncleanness, you damn yourself, for this is the nature of sin, as soon as it is committed, the Judge's sentence is uttered. Have you been drunk? Have you over-eaten yourself? Have your stolen? Stop, and turn back; thank the goodness of God, that He has not taken you away in the midst of your sins; seek not more time wherein to commit iniquity. Many have they been who have perished suddenly, in the midst of bad and

²⁴ St. Aug. on St. John's Gospel, Tract. XXXIII. No. 7.

²⁵ Eccles. viii. 11.

vicious lives, and have gone away to manifest damnation; have a fear lest the same thing befall you.

“But, you say, they have been many to whom God has given time, and they have been to confession in their old age. What then? Is that a proof that it will be given to you? Perchance, you say. Why do you say Perchance? It befalls sometimes. Think that it is of thy soul you are considering. Look at it the other way, and say: What if it be not given? But, you say, and what if it be? May it be so—it is true that it is among His gifts—but nevertheless, this is the safe and the better way.”²⁶

God never changes; His thoughts of sin are the same now as when in the unknown past He expelled the rebellious angels from heaven, or as when the sin of Adam brought upon the human race all sorrow and trial and evil. His hatred of sin has not grown less since the days of the Flood, nor has He become more accustomed to it since He burnt up Sodom and Gomorrah in His anger. His hatred of sin is the same now as when He died to atone for it upon the cross of Calvary in shame. Do we ever think that it wrung tears from His holy eyes and caused His bloody sweat in the garden of Gethsemani and drew the last drop of blood from His Sacred Heart?

Is He any less powerless now than when He visited sin with such manifest anger in the days of old? Can we say when we sin: “How doth God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?”²⁷ No, we cannot say this, for although He waits patiently, yet time is nothing with Him. “Before the mountains were made, or the earth and the world was formed; from eternity and to eternity Thou art God,” exclaims the holy King David.²⁸

God hates sin always and everywhere with an in-

²⁶ St. John Chrys. Ser. XXII. on II. Cor.

²⁷ Ps. lccii. II.

²⁸ Ps. lxxxix. 2.

finite hatred, and yet He is infinitely merciful and patient with the sinner. The devil knows him and despises him; God knows him and loves him. Wonderful beyond anything of which we have thought or conception! All nature cries out against the sinner. Why should he have light, or heat, or food? Why should he enjoy anything, or see, or hear, or prosper in any way? Hell is waiting to swallow him up; the devil cries out for his damnation and is impatient for it, and yet God forbears, and waits patiently. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live."²⁹ And St. Peter tells us: "The Lord delayeth not His promise, as some imagine, but dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance."³⁰ What more do we want? What more do we expect?

And not only does He hold out this sincere, efficacious promise of pardon, but He actually seeks the sinner, looks for him, follows him up, and, as it were, keeps after him all the time, and every day, yea, every moment of his life.

Hear what God says to sinners by the mouth of His great prophet Jeremias, and see how He comes down, as it were, and begs them to repent. "Behold I will close their wounds and give them health, and I will cure them; and I will reveal to them the prayer of peace and truth. . . . And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against Me, and I will forgive all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned against Me and despised Me."³¹ And again He tells us by His prophet Isaias: "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow; and if they be red as crimson they shall be white as wool."³² Now, in ordinary life the one who offends is the one who should

²⁹ Ezech. xxxiii. 2.

³⁰ II. Pet. iii. 9.

³¹ Jer. xxxiii. 6-8.

³² Isaias i. 18.

seek pardon; but with God this is reversed; it is He, the wonderful, the merciful, the powerful, who seeks to be reconciled with a miserable sinner who has the presumption and the hardihood to offend Him. We fly away from Him. We do our best to keep out of His way. We close our ears to His gentle, persuasive voice, calling, calling, pleading, pleading, in accents of infinite love.

“I fled Him down the nights and down the days;
 I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
 I fled Him, down the labyrinthian ways
 Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
 I fled from Him, and under running laughter
 of vistaed hopes, I sped;
 And shot, precipitated,
 Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,
 From those strong Feet that followed, followed after,
 But with unhurrying chase
 And imperturbèd pace
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy
 They beat—and a Voice beat
 More instant than the Feet—
 All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.”³³

Has this idea, so beautifully expressed by the poet, ever been true in your case? Do you flee from God, down the nights and days? Does your mind exert itself to find excuses from obeying Him? Do you laugh off His precepts and in the joy and happiness of the world try to forget that He is ever pursuing you? Do you not well know that all things betray you when you betray God? And He fills your soul with trouble and anxiety and remorse in order to bring you back again to Him. What would become of us if He let us go on in the way in which we wanted? We would wander off like stray sheep and be devoured by the wolves of hell. “I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost: seek Thy servant, because I have not forgotten Thy commandments.”³⁴

³³ Thompson, “The Hound of Heaven.”

³⁴ Ps. cxviii. 176.

Think for a moment and ponder on some of the parables of our divine Lord showing how anxiously He seeks for the sinner. In one He is the Good Shepherd, who gives His life for His sheep; ³⁵ in another He goes after the sheep and brings it home upon His shoulder, rejoicing; ³⁶ in another He compares Himself to a woman who has lost a piece of money and having found it calls her neighbors to rejoice with her. "So I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance." ³⁷ Who is there that does not know of the parable of the Prodigal Son? As long as the world lasts that wonderful testimonial of God's love will last. The Father sees His erring son afar off, and instead of turning him away He receives him with open arms, makes a banquet for him, "because he was dead and is come to life again; he was lost and is found." ³⁸ See Him as He weeps over the sinful, apostate city of Jerusalem, the capital city of His people; He weeps not for the stones, nor the buildings, but for the people. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not." ³⁹

God is surely love; God loves His creatures, erring, sinful, frail. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man should lay down his life for his friends." ⁴⁰ Our Saviour laid down His life for His enemies; He besought pardon for His very executioners and for all those who had a hand in His death. No one can sin so much that He will not forgive him, if he is sorry; no one can wander so far that He cannot follow him. The fire that burns in His Sacred Heart is that of love and not of hatred; He died for us all without exception. "With a strong cry and tears, He offered up prayers

³⁵ John x.

³⁶ Luke xv.

³⁷ Luke xv.

³⁸ Luke xv.

³⁹ Matt. xxiii. 37.

⁴⁰ John xv. 13.

and supplications to Him that was able to save Him from death, and He was heard from His reverence.”⁴¹ His prayers were for us all, and they will never lose their efficacy.

God is ever ready to take a penitent sinner back to His favor; think of Mary Magdalen, the wanton woman, who knelt at the foot of His cross, and was the first to see Him after His mother on the Resurrection morning. If Judas Iscariot had heeded Jesus he would not have had the awful end he did, but would have been ranked with the Apostles and forgiven.

Even to the last God pursues the sinner until probation is no more. He may be unconscious as far as the world is concerned, but he is conscious of his God; he may have led a life of crime and blasphemy and public scandal, deriding everything holy, laughing at God and scoffing at His commandments, and yet God can make him as clean, as pure, and as holy as if he had never sinned, if he only turns to Him in sorrow.

Look at the thieves on their crosses beside the dying Saviour; both are cursing and blaspheming, groaning and writhing in their dying agonies. The eternal Son of God is also dying within a few feet of them. His death is for them, and both see His agony, and see His Mother looking at Him. Both had the same example of patience and suffering and doubtless both had often heard of His wonderful life. The three would soon be beyond all earthly suffering; one of them turned toward the central figure in accents of sorrow and love. “Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom,” and in reply he got the answer: “Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.”⁴²

What happened then can happen now; but remember, if you or I abuse this wonderful mercy of God, our damnation will be the deeper. It is because God is

⁴¹ Hébr. v. 7.

⁴² Luke xxiii. 42, 43.

good that some people are damned; and if we take the very gifts of God and fling them, as it were, in His face, what a hell will be ours after the judgment!

Love is action; love rules the world, not hate, nor strife, nor war, nor force. We cannot say we love God if we sin and keep on sinning. "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them: he it is that loveth Me. And he that loveth Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him."⁴³ And again our Lord says: "Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter in the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."⁴⁴

If God's love will not influence us, we may be sure that hell's terror will have little effect upon us. What has God done for us? Oh, what has He not done for us! Let us go over our lives and see the love of God in everything; His patience, His long-suffering; His graces, His kindness, and all in the face of the fact that only for Him we might now be in hell. "The sweetest of all earthly joys is love; and the life in heaven is a life of love. Love, more than any other human passion, has controlled the destinies of the world. It has been historically the greatest natural motive power on earth, nay, what of natural brightness each life of man on earth possesses, whence comes it, if not from love? What should we be at this moment if we had none to love? How all our light would become darkness for awhile until our eyes could bear the light of God? Not to have God to love is hell. Yet the love of all passionate lovers upon earth, thrown together, could not equal the love of the lowest and the calmest soul in heaven. Eternity will give us new powers of loving. We shall love with some great nameless love, of which parental, filial, conjugal, fraternal loves only

⁴³ John xiv. 21.

⁴⁴ Matt. vii. 21.

represent some portions or some elements. The jubilee of this immense power of loving is inconceivable. The objects of our love will be multiplied ten thousand-fold; and yet the very multiplication of its objects will only quicken the intensity of the love. Then consider that the whole of this ocean of affection will always be poured out gloriously in the immortal vehemence of a spotless love unutterably blissful because unutterably holy." ⁴⁵

St. Gregory the Great says: "Dearly beloved brethren, if we consider what and how great things are promised unto us in heaven, all things which are upon the earth grow poor to our minds. For when this world's goods are reckoned against the gladness above, they are found to be a clog rather than a help, this present life being compared to the life eternal, is yet rather to be called death than life. For what is the daily failing of our corruption, but, as it were, a creeping death? But what tongue is there that can tell, or what understanding that can comprehend, how great is the rejoicing in the city above, where they have part with the choirs of angels, where they stand with the most blessed spirits before the glory of the Creator, where they see the face of God present, where they behold the Incomprehensible Light, where they have no fear of death, and where they rejoice eternally incorruptible? When we hear these things our hearts burn within us, and we long to be already there where we hope to rejoice forever. But we cannot attain great rewards save through great labor. Therefore saith the excellent preacher Paul: "He is not crowned, except he strive lawfully." ⁴⁶ The greatness of the reward doth delight our mind; let not the throes of the struggle dishearten us." ⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Faber, "Spiritual Conferences," p. 363.

⁴⁶ II. Tim. ii. 5.

⁴⁷ St. Greg. Hom. XXXVII. on the Gospels.

God is surely love. Blessed be God forever. "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy. And according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my iniquity." ⁴⁸ Amen.

⁴⁸ Ps. 1. 3.

GOD'S WILL THAT ALL MEN BE SAVED

“As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live.” (Ezech. xxxiii. 11.)

SYNOPSIS

The human race has no doubt of God's existence.—The idea of Him may be warped, but it is there nevertheless.—No race has ever been found without the knowledge of a Superior Being.—Revelation from Adam to Christ. Some do not believe this.—God exists.—Being infinite, He must be good.—Infinite love.—The human mind cannot fully grasp this.—God shows His love in all things, especially in man.—Father Faber on God's love.—God made all things for man, especially for the good man.—Everything is intended for man's salvation. The Incarnation.—The life of Christ and His death.—What the death and incarnation of Christ mean.—The probation of angels and men.—What is life?—The sincere desire of God for the salvation of all men.—Examples.—Why are some lost?—St. Paul on this question.—Merits and demerits.—Does God's will change?—St. Augustine on this point.—Man's freedom.—God's foreknowledge is not the cause of man's salvation or damnation.—Calvinism.—Newman on Providence.—Faber on Predestination.—The case of the unbaptized.—Heretics and infidels.—Is God disappointed?—Presumption and despair.—Good out of evil.—Why did God create those who are lost?—St. Augustine on this point.—Exhortation.

IN the minds of the men and women who have ever lived, and are now living upon the earth, there is not the least doubt of the existence of God. It is true that with some of the earth's inhabitants this idea is warped and distorted, but that they doubt the existence of a Superior Being to whom they are amenable is beyond the power of any one to prove. No race, howsoever low in the scale of civilization, has ever been

found without the idea of God. This fact may be based upon another fact, that man is a reasoning animal by his very nature, and again, it may be that God never allowed the primitive revelation of His existence to be wholly destroyed or blotted out from the mind of man. Distorted frightfully indeed it was, but never wholly lost.

Now, in the revelation of God, through Adam, through the patriarchs before the Flood, through Abraham, Moses, and the Jewish people after it, this primitive revelation was handed down, increased and amplified, until it received its full culmination in Christ. It is true that with some, atheists or agnostics, all this is denied. But is unbelief of such a kind really and sincerely possible to any man? In other words, can any one really believe that there is no God? David long ago well said: "The fool said in his heart: There is no God."¹ And the man who says this is truly a very unwise man, for "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Fools despise wisdom and instruction."² "All wisdom is from the Lord God, and hath been always with Him, and is before all time."³

God exists, and is infinite. That there is no God is at bottom unthinkable. If I have being there must be an Eternal Being. In the end it makes no difference through what chain of causes I came; there must be an end, for an infinite number of causes is an absurdity. There must be a final cause, and that is the Supreme Being—the eternal, omnipotent, omniscient God.

This Being must of necessity be good, for He is Being itself, and evil cannot be with Him, which would be a contradiction. Evil is the negation of good, and thus God cannot deny Himself by having

¹ Ps. lii. 1.

² Prov. i. 7.

³ Ecclus. i. 1.

evil. God therefore is infinitely good. And St. John tells us by revelation: "God is charity,"⁴ [love], and St. John's Master, our Lord Jesus Christ, has taught us to say to God: "Our Father who art in heaven."⁵

It is impossible for finite man to fully grasp the idea of Infinite Love. The human mind must take God in parts, as it were, and the moment we take one attribute we must of necessity drop the others. God has not parts or attributes; we cannot say that He possesses any attribute. He is simply what we call attributes, in an infinite manner, and so, God has not love, He is love. And as He is love, and is everywhere whole and entire, so wherever He is He loves His creatures, and as only He can.

This love, bear well in mind, is not a general or superficial superintendence of the human race. By no means; it is a love that goes out to each and every individual, as if no other ever existed or will exist save that person. It is a personal love, and the Person who bears it is God. This love is literally poured upon each and all more plentifully than the sunlight on the earth. Nothing we can think of will give an adequate idea of God's overpowering love. No one is ever for a moment absent from God's thoughts and loving designs, "for in Him we live, and move, and are."⁶

No human being ever lived without His creative power, nor lives now, nor will ever live. Were it not for Him we could not be alive; were it not for Him we could not continue to live. He has given us life, and all things by which we sustain it, and He is the sole owner of all His creation. The brute creation belongs to Him with its various species and its perfect adaptation to the end for which He created

⁴ I. John iv. 8.

⁶ Acts xvii. 28.

⁵ Matt. vi. 9.

it: its instincts, its methods of living and providing for its food and propagation—its wonderful instincts so near to intelligence and yet so far from that Godlike faculty in man. This marvellous creation of God, ranging from the mammoth to the microbe, has its life mapped out for it by its Creator, and all are acting out unconsciously His will and are sustained by His power. The pleasure of their existence overbalances whatever pain they may experience, and what we may look upon as great pain in them may not be so in reality. But it is a different thing altogether with man. God's love for him is of a kind by itself. The brute cannot appreciate God's love, for it has no intelligence; man can appreciate this love by his intelligence and follow it by his will.

Father Faber can tell infinitely better than I what this love of God is, and this is what he says. "The whole creation floats, as it were, in the ocean of God's almighty love. His love is the cause of all things and of all the conditions of all things, and it is their end and rest as well. Had it not been for His love, they never would have existed, and were it not for His love now they would not be one hour preserved. Love is the reading of all the riddles of nature, grace, and glory; and reprobation is practically the positive refusal on the part of the free creature to partake of the Creator's love. Love is the light of all dark mysteries, the sublime consummation of all hopes, desires, and wisdoms, and the marvellous interpretation of God. Light is not so universal as love, for love is in darkness as well as light. Life is less strong than love; for love is the victory over death, and is itself an immortal life. If it pleased God at this moment to destroy the air, the planet would have wheeled but a few leagues eastward before it would have become the home of universal death and desolation. Myriad myriads of warm and joyous lives would have been

extinguished in one inarticulate gasp of choking agony. Not only would the streets and fields have been strewn with the suffocated dead, but the birds on the wing would have fallen lifeless to the ground. The deep blue waters of the sea would not have screened their multitudinous tribes from the energy of the destroying edict. The subterranean creatures would have been found out and stifled in the crevices of the rocks, the black waters, or the winding ways beneath the ground. . . . Yet this picture of ruin is but a faint image of what would happen if God withdrew into His own self-sufficient glory, and called off that immensity of gratuitous love with which He covers all creation. For the destruction of the air would be but a natural desolation. It would not invade the vast kingdom of moral beauty, of spiritual life, of natural goodness, of infused holiness, of angelical intelligence, or of the beatitude of human souls.”⁷

And what has God not done for man in both material and spiritual things? The world was made for him, and for ages and ages was slowly prepared to be his abode and habitation. Who can count up the numberless years from the days of its incandescent and gaseous condition, maybe thrown off in such a state from the larger body, the sun, until the day when Adam opened his eyes in wonder, looked around at the beautiful scene, and adored the Lord his God? Think of all that went before this reasoning being was made. Whole genera of animals had lived their lives for thousands of years, and had become extinct. Giant trees had sprouted, lived, bloomed, and died. Animals and plants were of an enormous size, had lived and died in the remote ages of the world, and finally man came. It seems far-fetched and would appear to place man upon too lofty a pedestal were we to assert that all things were created for him, even the

⁷ Faber, “The Creator and the Creature,” p. 131.

immense far-flung array of the heavenly bodies. It is literally true that God made all things for man, not only the macrocosm, the vast universe above his head, but also the microcosm, the wonderful universe under his feet. This was done not alone for man in general, but was designed by the Eternal Father for the coming of the Ideal Man, the God-Man, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then, again, no man comes into the world in a fortuitous manner, or in a haphazard way. God sends him here, and benignly designs the time of his coming and the place. I might have been born thousands of years ago, but God willed I should be born at the time and under the very circumstances in which I was born. He gave me the very parents I have, and I would not be alive at all were it not for Him. All this was foreknown to Him for all eternity, and there is no past with Him, nor future, all is the eternal Now. And what I say of myself is just as true of each and every human being that has come or ever will come into the world. Adam came at the time allotted, as will come the last human being born upon the earth. And in between these two every one comes at the time best suited for his salvation.

My fellow-beings come into contact with me, and all are intended for the glory of God, my probation and ultimate salvation. Some are relations and friends, some are sincere, some insincere, some are good, some bad: but all are for my good. It is very easy to get along well with the good, but difficult to do so with the bad. God knows all that, and the inspired preacher of the Old Testament says: "The furnace trieth the potter's vessels, and the trial of affliction just men."⁸ And the Book of Proverbs tells us: "As silver is tried by fire, and gold in the furnace, so the Lord trieth the hearts."⁹

But everything else sinks into insignificance before

⁸ Ecclus. xxvii. 6.

⁹ Prov. xvii. 3.

one action of God's love for man—the Incarnation. It is the crowning action of God's love for man, it is the beacon whose coruscations illumine the whole world, whose beams gave brightness to the angels at the rebellion of Lucifer and his host, whose benign rays shone through the darkness of Adam's fall, and whose light is shed the world over. God became man! Infinite, wonderful humiliation! It is a marvellous mystery. And yet every man can say for himself, God did this for me.

St. John, the apostle of love, tells us: "God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him."¹⁰ Christ Himself says: "The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a redemption for many."¹¹ "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross."¹²

From our Lord's birth in the privacy and poverty of Bethlehem's stable to His public and ignominious death upon the cross of Calvary, all, all is done to redeem, to buy back, man from the slavery of the devil "into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."¹³ His life is our model; His death is our redemption; His resurrection is our glory. Each and every one of us can appropriate and apply to ourselves the words of St. Paul in reference to our Lord: "Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present wicked world, according to the will of God and our Father."¹⁴ And oh! that we would be able to say with the same great Apostle: "With Christ I am nailed to the cross. And I live,

¹⁰ John iii. 16, 17.

¹¹ Matt. xx. 28.

¹² Phil. ii. 8.

¹³ Rom. viii. 21.

¹⁴ Gal. i. 4.

now not I; but Christ liveth in me. And that I live now in the flesh: I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself for me.”¹⁵

Every man that ever came into the world was delivered by Christ. The angels' probation, maybe ages and ages before anything else was made, was on account of the incarnation of the Second Person of the adorable Trinity, the future Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary. He is the Saviour of the angels, as He is of all men who lived before He became man, of all men today and for all future time. In the end He will be their Judge. He is your Saviour and my Saviour, your Judge and my Judge.

The future incarnation and death of the Son of God saved Adam and Eve; it was intended equally for Cain and Abel, the people before the Flood and for those after it. It was for Abraham and Isaac, Jacob and Esau, Moses and the people of Israel, as well as for those outside. David benefited by it, as also the Evangelist St. John. And it was as sincerely decreed for the good of Judas Iscariot as for the good of St. Peter. Even when the former had consummated the greatest crime of the ages Christ made an offer to win his love, and a greater overture was made to him than to the head of the Church.

God never intended that man should pass through life on a bed of roses. Even had our first parents never fallen there would have been some kind of probation for His children. But since the Fall things have taken a wholly different aspect, so that the holy Job could truly say: “The life of man upon earth is a warfare”;¹⁶ yes, indeed, it is a warfare against the world, the devil, and even our own selves. St. Paul says “that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty to God unto the pulling down of fortifications, destroying counsels, and every height that ex-

¹⁵ Gal. ii. 19, 20.

¹⁶ Job vii. 1.

alteth itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ.”¹⁷

It is all very fine to say, let us eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die. But does death end it all? St. Paul says no. “It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.”¹⁸ Suffering, in one way or another, is the normal condition of life, and Christ has given us an unparalleled example. He whom He loved the most, He made bear the most suffering. His holy Mother is the queen of martyrs. The more suffering for God, the greater the reward. The man who patiently suffers, conquers. Christ was truly never more a king than upon the throne of His cross.

To quote the numerous statements of the sincere desire of God for the salvation of all men would be a task beyond my power, and would entail simply the transcribing of passage after passage from the Old and New Testaments, beginning with the Book of Genesis and ending with the Apocalypse. In the Old Testament God, as it were, lowers Himself to prove His desire to save all men. He actually swears that He has this desire. “As I live” is a form of oath, and the Eternal Truth takes it. Then think of Christ’s parables—the Prodigal Son, the Good Shepherd, the Woman Who found the Coin, and many others all proving His statement: “I am not come to call the just, but sinners.”¹⁹

One of the sneering and telling accusations that the Pharisees made against Him was that He was “a friend of publicans and sinners.”²⁰ He called the despised publican Levi to follow Him, and behold we have St. Matthew, the apostle and evangelist. He forgave the woman taken in adultery, brought to Him by

¹⁷ II. Cor. x. 4, 5.

¹⁸ Heb. xiv. 27.

¹⁹ Matt. ix. 13.

²⁰ Luke vii. 34.

the watchful, hateful Pharisees to see what He would do. He pardoned another in the house of Simon, and sent her away into peace with a cleansed soul. He drew the Magdalen to His love, and He held her there with stronger hooks than those of steel, and His blood poured upon her head as she knelt at the foot of His cross. The Magdalen and the Mother—the sinner and the sinless—stood together beneath the cross upon which died the all-holy Son of God.

The Most Holy Trinity has given incontestable proofs of love for all men and for their salvation. “The Father is love; the Son is grace; the Holy Ghost is communion.”²¹

And now we shall attempt to answer the crucial question—how does it happen that some are lost? If all that has been said is true, why is there a hell? Why does the Christ already described prophesy that on the last day He shall utter the terrible judgment: “Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and His angels”?²² If it is the will of God that all men be saved, why is it not so? And why are there devils anyway? The Apostle St. Paul says: “He hath mercy on whom He will; and whom He will, He hardeneth. Thou wilt say therefore to me: Why doth He then find fault? for who resisteth His will?”²³ Nobody could put the question stronger than the great Apostle of the Gentiles. He certainly does not mean that God is the author of sin, but that by withholding His grace from the obdurate, hardened sinner, He, as it were, hardens his heart in punishment of his past demerits.

We must bear well in mind beyond and above any other consideration that God exists. Now, as He is eternal, infinite, and all-holy, it cannot be possible that He could foreordain anything but good for His crea-

²¹ Antiphon, III. Noct. Trinity Sunday.

²² Matt. xxv. 41.

²³ Rom. ix. 18, 19.

tures. A malignant God, infinite, omnipotent, is a contradiction, because the Infinite and All-powerful can have no defect. He must be all love. Besides God has no future, nor past, so that in consequence He does not in reality foreordain anything, everything being eternally present to Him. However, as far as we are concerned, we may in our finite way consider God's will as antecedent or consequent. The antecedent would then have regard to certain circumstances hereafter to happen; the consequent would take into account what has already happened. This double will, or two-fold way of the will, is happening at all times among men. There is praise or blame, there is the reward or punishment. All things rightly considered, the well-regulated state exalts to offices of honor and emolument its heroes and statesmen and looks after the well-being of all its citizens. The antecedent will is that all be rewarded and protected, but this does not prevent the police-power of the state, nor its power and right to build jails for malefactors, and its duty to deprive even of life those guilty of flagitious crimes. And this is true not only of states in general, but of all individuals, in Church, in state, in families.

The same thing can be said of God: He rewards or punishes according to the merits or demerits of the person. Does He change His will? That is impossible, for His will is Himself and He is eternally changeless. But as far as we are concerned He seems to change, and revelation in the Old and New Testaments assures us of this. Jonas the prophet was sent to the Ninivites to tell them that they and their great city were to be destroyed by God in forty days; the decree had gone forth and this was the warning. And the people of Ninive heard the warning, and from the highest to the lowest all did penance. This is the

proclamation of the king: "Who can tell if God will turn and forgive; and will turn away from His fierce anger, and we shall not perish?" And the prophet then tells us: "And God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way; and God had mercy with regard to the evil which He had said that He would do to them, and He did it not."²⁴

If this does not show an apparent change in God nothing does. And we must remember that the God of the Ninivites is the same now. If He had an antecedent and consequent will then, He has the same now. If you do well, God wills your salvation; if you do ill, God wills your damnation. God promises salvation to all, but all will not avail themselves of the means. Surely God could not patronize rebellion, and sin is rebellion. But suppose you say, I cannot help it, what then? You cannot help it, you cannot avoid sin? Then the absurd follows. There is no God. Reason and revelation tell you that God will help you to keep His law. Listen to the strong testimony of Jesus Christ: "Amen, Amen I say unto you, that he who heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath life everlasting; and cometh not into judgment but is passed from death to life."²⁵ Again He says: "Come to Me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart; and you shall find rest to your souls. For My yoke is sweet and My burden light."²⁶

And our very reason tells us that God must be good, because He is infinite. Antecedently to everything else God loves men, and truly, sincerely, and heartily wills and wishes their salvation. He looks not to their final impenitence, but gives them all necessary graces.

²⁴ Jonas iii. 9, 10.

²⁵ John v. 24.

²⁶ Matt. xi. 28-30.

It all depends upon man's co-operation with these graces, and even then God helps him to co-operate, helps him to answer His call.

Listen to St. Augustine²⁷ on this matter: "In those things which we have already, praise we God the bounteous Giver; in those which we have not yet, hold we Him our debtor. For debtor hath He become, not by receiving aught from us, but by promising what it hath pleased Him. For in one sense do we say to a man: 'You owe me, because I gave you': and in another we say, 'You owe me, because you promised me.' When you say, 'You owe me, because I gave you,' some boon has proceeded from you, but as a loan, not as a gift. But when you say, 'You owe me, because you promised me,' you have given nothing, and yet you exact. For his goodness who has promised will give, lest good faith be turned to evil. For whosoever deceives, is evil. But do we say to God, 'Render to me, because I have given Thee'? What have we given to God, when all we are, and all we have of good, we have from Him? Nothing then have we given to Him. There is no way whereby we can require of God on this title, especially as the Apostle says, 'For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him.'"²⁸

God made man with the freedom of choice. If he is to be rewarded or punished he must certainly be able to do right or wrong. Were he predestined only to do right, where would there be place for reward? If he could not do right, where would be the reason for punishment? Brutes can do neither right nor wrong because they are governed by instinct; but man has free-will, and God has such respect for him that He

²⁷ Ser. CVIII. No. 2, on the New Testament.

²⁸ Rom. xi. 34, 35.

will not interfere with that. True, He draws him by His graces, by His appeals to his high faculties, but never forces him. In the end he can refuse to serve. As Moses in the days of old said to the people of Israel: "I call heaven and earth to witness this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Choose therefore life, that both thou and thy seed may live, and that thou mayst love the Lord thy God, and obey His will, and adhere to Him,"²⁹ so God gives to all men the power of choice. The freedom to rebel is not freedom: it is the defect of freedom. God is essentially free, and so it is impossible for Him to do wrong. The blessed in heaven are free with the highest kind of freedom, for they cannot fall from God, now that they are in possession of the Beatific Vision.

There must have been in the beginning some probation, some trial, for the angels, to which many of them succumbed. Before their fall there certainly was no hell, no place of punishment. They created, as it were, their own hell by their rebellion, and our Saviour says: "I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven."³⁰

"He trusted to have equalled the Most-High,
If he opposed; and, with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God
Raised impious war in heaven, and battle proud
With vain attempt, Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms."³¹

God created Adam and Eve in the state of innocence and holiness, and placed them in the garden of Eden. He gave them life, sanctity, and dominion over all

²⁹ Deut. xxx. 19, 20.

³⁰ Luke x. 18.

³¹ Milton, "Paradise Lost,"
Book I.

things, but with the command to obey Him. They fell, and we know the result; that original sin is the cause of all the disorders that have ever been, or will be, on earth. Judas was called to be an apostle with the same sincerity as Peter and the rest. He saw the wondrous works, he listened to that eloquence of Christ, the like of which was never heard before. He was in the school of Jesus Christ, and learned no lesson, but listened to the devil, and he committed the greatest crime of the world, sold his loving Master for the price of a slave, and wound it all up by suicide.

Now, the question may be asked which is at the root of all: Did God know that the angels would fall? He did. Did He know that Adam would fall? He did. Did He know that Judas would fall? He did. Did he create the angels, or Adam, or Judas to have them fall? The thought is preposterous. God's foreknowledge makes no angel or man fall. If God created only those whom He foreknew would be saved, there would be no one to be rewarded.

It remained for Calvin in the sixteenth century to teach a terrible doctrine of predestination. According to him, God has chosen some souls for salvation and others for damnation. Nothing can alter these decrees. Those who are to be saved can do as they please. Sin is no obstacle, indeed it only exalts those who are to be saved. On the other hand good works, prayer, mortification, and a holy life only damn deeper those who are to be lost. A man may be a scoffer, a libertine, an evil-liver; that makes no difference, for is not the eternal decree in his favor? And a man may practise the mortification of a St. Basil, may have the love of a St. Francis of Assisi, the prayerfulness of a St. Augustine, but in the end he will be damned, for is not the eternal decree in his disfavor? Judas had to refuse the grace, Peter had to take it. Paul and Augustine could not act against the miracle worked

in their favor, nor could the Jewish priests help putting Christ to death. In this system Baptism and the other Sacraments really do not save, for you will be saved or damned with them as well as without them.

What a horrifying doctrine this is! If men were really to live up to it the world would be in chaos. And yet it was professed by many, and gave birth to the Puritans and the numerous heretical bodies. It only shows to what a pass things will come when men separate themselves from the authority and guidance of the Church. She teaches that men are saved by merit and lost by their demerits. We are not consulted about our coming here, but we are about our going hence.

This is what Cardinal Newman has to say in reference to the present matter. "When we are about to pass judgment on the dealings of Providence with other men, we shall do well to consider first His dealings with ourselves. We cannot know about others, about ourselves we do know something; and we know that He has ever been good to us, and not severe. Is it not wise to argue from what we actually know to what we do not know? It may turn out in the day of account that unforgiven souls, while charging His laws with injustice in the case of others, may be unable to find fault with His dealings severally towards themselves." ³²

This from the great Cardinal is perfectly true; the devils can say that they were justly condemned. There is not a man in hell but is there through his own action, and it is this very knowledge that makes his hell so unbearable. He could have been saved, he knows that very well, and yet he is not!

A quotation from a man who combined in himself the qualities of a great poet and learned theologian, Father Faber, will, we think, not be out of place here.

³² "Grammar of Assent," p. 410.

He says: "To what shall we dare liken the mind of God? With what shapes of allegory shall we venture to clothe that infinite eternal object, which is the fountain of all our destinies? To us it looks like some tremendous chain of mountains, whose sublimities are inaccessible, whose heights are hidden away in the darkness, whose shapes are not the shapes of earthly scenery, always clad in the beautiful repose of radiant light. But it is a chain of mountains which has only one side, one descent. None ever climbed those heights, nor ever shall. But we know that, if they were surmounted, there would be no descent upon the other side. A vast table-land stretches interminably there into the boundless distance, an unbeginning, uncreated land, of which faith alone, itself a supernatural virtue, can report; and it reports only, together with some few facts, the unchanging peace of awful sanctity, which is the life and joy of God. That is the land of the Divine Decrees. There is the cradle of Eternal Purposes, which were never younger than they are today, and needed no cradle, because they had neither beginning, growth, nor change. In the trackless distances of that nameless upland have we ourselves been hidden from all eternity; so that in some sense our nothingness is clothed in the robes of God's eternity. In those untraveled unimaginable plains the Divine Perfections have been tranquilly occupied with us in unbeginning love, an unbeginning love which does the work of everlasting justice. In those fastnesses, round which a glory of impenetrable darkness hangs, lie the living mysteries of predestination, of the Divine permissions, and of that unnamed perfection out of which the gift of Freedom to creatures came. It is a land before whose misty regions we bend our knees in breathless adoration, in prayer which ventures not to clothe itself with words." ³³

³³ "The Precious Blood," p. 137.

From this strictly theological, although poetical, statement we gather that God knows all things, that He is omniscient, for if He were not, He would not be God. We are compelled to cry out with the great apostle St. Paul: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways!"³⁴

Christ distinctly says: "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water, and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."³⁵ This means that only those who are baptized can be saved. What are we, then, to say of infants, and those insane, who never had the use of reason and die without it?

When God created Adam He raised him at the same time from the purely natural order up into the supernatural order. He promised him the beatific vision of Himself. Of his own nature he neither could desire nor would be able to see God face to face. God had to put this desire into him, and strengthen him to accomplish it. It was a revelation, and the promise created the desire. Adam fell, and although this desire was there, yet heaven's beatific vision was denied, until Christ by His death, resurrection and ascension threw open once more the gates of heaven to men. Before that nobody ever saw God as the blessed see Him now. Had man a right to this glorious vision? The answer is emphatically no. The desire comes from the free promise of God, and if revelation had not told us we could never have desired. For how can any one desire that of which he knows nothing?

There is no desire in the infant, nor in the foetus, nor in the insane from birth. The revelation of God cannot be understood by them. If baptized, they are saved by the faith of the Church, for they cannot them-

³⁴ Rom. xi. 33.

³⁵ John iii. 5.

selves do anything meritorious. If they die without baptism, what then? Are they deprived of anything to which they have a right? The answer is no, for the reasons already given. The Church has made no pronouncement upon their future state, but allows the belief to be held that they are in great natural happiness, and miss nothing.

As regards infidels and heretics, we must bear in mind that God is the Father of each and every individual of the human race. The Church holds baptism to be of three kinds: namely, of water, the usual kind; of blood, by martyrdom; or by desire. Whoever wishes to do the will of God, even though he never heard of baptism, God will take the will for the deed, and with sorrow for sin He will save his soul at death. His idea of God may not be anything like what we have by blessed revelation, but He knows His child and will judge him according to his light. What has been said of the infidel, eye of the savage, can be also applied to heretics. But it must be well borne in mind that there is inculpable ignorance of the truth. The Church is as wide as the world. To her body belong all visible believers; to her soul belong all those who in one way or another believe in a Supreme Being and sincerely follow the light.

To hear some persons talk of predestination, one might be led to believe that God is inexorable. On the contrary, He is infinitely kind, loving, and good. "God is love," says St. John, the apostle of love. Those who are all the time babbling about predestination and hell are the ones who fear it most. It never bothered the saints, nor does it those who try to live good lives. There is such a thing as predestination; there is such a thing as the revolution of the earth around the sun, but no sane man goes around telling every one he meets of this physical fact, neither need he worry about predestination.

A last word ought to be said on this section of the discourse. If God wishes the salvation of all, is He disappointed if men die in rebellion and are damned? By no means. He draws good out of evil, for nothing can frustrate His will. The fall of the first Adam brought the second Adam, Christ, in the Incarnation. The fall of the angels confirmed the others in glory. Lucifer fell; Michael remained. The crime of Judas sold our Lord, and He redeemed the world. And so, the same can be said of all evil. God's will is supreme, and it is only by obeying it that we become free. "Why has God allowed the reprobate to come into existence? To prevent their existence would be to carry on the natural order by a series of supernatural interferences; and no one would object more to such a thing than the enemies of God themselves. Miracles are rare events; they too occur in accordance with law, and require an adequate cause to produce them, such as prayer, the merits of a holy life, the need of proving a word of God. The reprobates do not furnish an adequate cause for miracles. Fidelity to small graces induces greater ones; obstinate resistance to abundant grace and evidence tends to dry up the streams rather than to promote a more copious flow. It is surely enough for the obstinate sinner that he has the power of escaping from the sentence of reprobation, and that God is ready to help him if he only cares for help. It is for him to accommodate himself to the general laws of living, and not for the whole course of nature to be continually modified in deference to his perversity. The ways of God are inscrutable to your limited vision. Do not expect to penetrate them in this life. Wait with humble faith for the revelation of God's secrets and say, 'I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear' (Ps. xvi, 15)."³⁶

It is impossible for us in this life to see and know

³⁶ Bellord's Meditations, vol. i. p. 63.

the designs of God; enough for us to know that He loves us and is infinitely good. God wills no sin, but He allows it. Nothing can be done without His willing it, or allowing it, and if He allows evil it is on account of man's free will. The malignity of His enemies is eventually turned upon themselves, and redounds to His greater honor and glory. They imagined they had destroyed Christ; and He arose glorious and immortal from the grave. They often imagined that they had ruined His Church, and she has risen younger and more beautiful than before. They laugh at and make little of the virtuous and good, and behold their names are forgotten and the virtuous and good are remembered and are triumphant. And so will it be to the end, and then the great vindication will take place. All will be shown up at the last day in the last Grand Assizes.

But if God is so good must we, or should we, be in any way remiss in His service? On the contrary, His goodness should excite us to greater service, and cause us to fear the more the danger of offending Him. He is a craven coward who takes advantage of love to work his own ends and betray the lover. Judas betrayed His loving Master and Saviour with a kiss, and his crime is justly abhorred by all men. Do not tamper with this love of God and think you can play fast and loose with it. The devil will try to deceive you by saying, God is good. You can depend upon Him, for He will forgive you. You can make friends with Him when you are dying. Or you can do this now, later on be sorry for it, and go to confession. Ah, how often has this been tried before. God plays fair; the devil loads the dice. You cannot play with him, for he is too old a hand and will hold his cards until you are cleaned out; then he will show his hand, and laugh at you. God gives you love; he gives you bluff. God is sincere; he is a liar.

Do not despair; God is too good for that. Judas despaired, and hanged himself. Do not presume; people are in hell because God is good. St. Peter presumed, and he fell.

St. Paul tells us, "with fear and trembling work out your salvation. For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will."³⁷ And St. John says, "Fear is not in charity [love]; but perfect charity casteth out fear, because fear hath pain. And he that feareth is not perfected in charity. Let us therefore love God, because God first hath loved us."³⁸

We must then have a great fear of losing the love of our heavenly Father, for St. Paul says: "Love therefore is the fulfilling of the law."³⁹ This love of God is the sign of our predestination, for we are justified by it. "For," as again says St. Paul, "I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."⁴⁰

If we serve God we need not worry about predestination, for He will surely save us. Is He not Truth itself, and has He not promised it? "God is faithful: by whom you are called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord."⁴¹ "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able: but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it."⁴² Everybody must be tried, but God will help in the trial. "If God be for us," says St. Paul, "who is against us?"⁴³

Sin will go on until the end of the world, for man

³⁷ Phil. ii. 12, 13.

³⁸ I. John iv. 18, 19.

³⁹ Rom. xiii. 10.

⁴⁰ Rom. viii. 38, 39.

⁴¹ I. Cor. i. 9.

⁴² I. Cor. x. 13.

⁴³ Rom. viii. 31.

can abuse his free will, but God's will triumphs in the end.

The great doctor of the Church, St. Augustine, writes thus on this topic. "The sins of men and angels do nothing to impede the great works of the Lord which accomplish His will (Ps. cx. 2). For He who by His providence and omnipotence distributes to every one his own portion, is able to make good use not only of the good, but also of the wicked. And thus making a good use of the wicked angel, who, in punishment of his first wicked volition was doomed to an obduracy that prevents him now from willing any good, why should not God have permitted him to tempt the first man, who had been created upright, that is to say, with a good will? For he had been so constituted, that if he looked to God for help, man's goodness should defeat the angel's wickedness; but if by proud self-pleasing he abandoned God, his Creator and Sustainer, he should be conquered. If his will remained upright, through leaning on God's help, he should be rewarded; if it became wicked, by forsaking God, he should be punished. But even this trusting in God's help could not itself be accomplished without God's help, although man had it in his power to relinquish the benefits of divine grace by pleasing himself. For as it is not in our power to live in this world without sustaining ourselves by food, while it is in our power to refuse this nourishment and cease to live, as those do who kill themselves, so it was not in man's power, even in paradise, to live as he ought without God's help; but it was in his power to live wickedly, though thus he should cut short his happiness, and incur very just punishment. Since, then, God was not ignorant that man would fall, why should He not have suffered him to be tempted by an angel who hated and envied him? It was not, indeed, that He was unaware that he should be conquered, but

because He foresaw that by the man's seed, aided by divine grace, this same devil himself should be conquered, to the greater glory of the saints. All was brought about in such a manner, that neither did any future event escape God's foreknowledge, nor did His foreknowledge compel any one to sin, and so as to demonstrate in the experience of the intelligent creation, human and angelic, how great a difference there is between the private presumption of the creature and the Creator's protection. For who will dare to believe or say that it was not in God's power to prevent both angels and men from sinning? But God preferred to leave this in their power, and thus to show both what evil could be wrought by their pride, and what good by His grace."⁴⁴

And now let me conclude with an exhortation from the Book of Ecclesiasticus. "Know ye that no one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded. For who hath continued in His commandment, and hath been forsaken? Or who hath called upon Him, and He hath despised him? For God is compassionate and merciful, and will forgive sins in the day of tribulation, and He is a protection to all that seek Him in truth."⁴⁵ Amen.

⁴⁴ "The City of God," Book XIV. No. 27.

⁴⁵ Ecclus. ii. 11-13.

RELIGION AND LIFE

“I am the door. By Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved: and he shall go in, and go out, and shall find pastures. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.”
(John x. 9, 10.)

SYNOPSIS

Explanation of the text.—Nowhere is man found destitute of religion.—Man is religious by nature.—What is religion?—The answer of St. Augustine.—Whence does religion come?—How it became corrupt.—How it was restored.—The primitive revelation.—Cardinal Newman on Christianity.—What Christianity has done.—How it enters into the life of men.—Opinions of some men on Christianity.—Only one form of true Christianity.—What it teaches.—The reply of the world to that teaching.—The necessity of dogma.—Dogma does not stifle liberty.—Liberty of thought is wrong.—Actions are founded on belief.—Luther’s doctrine now changed in Protestantism.—The Church on belief and works.—Difficulties in faith and science.—No real conflict between them.—The end of Protestantism.—Religion and life.—What is man?—Religion fills the physical, the intellectual, and the moral life of man.—The primary truths of religion are known by all.—Christianity is the synthesis of all good.—It adapts itself to all classes.—Its symbolism and sacraments.—The development of the Church.—What she has done.—Rome, Jerusalem, the Teutons.—Civilization.—Schools.—Womanhood.—Knighthood.—Philosophy and theology.—Loss and gain.—Life, love, action.—Historic Christianity.—A happy religion.—The Church understands human nature.

THIS text is a portion of the parable given by our Saviour, and recorded by St. John, in which He describes Himself as the Good Shepherd, and the very door of the sheepfold. In order that we may fully understand the comparison, especially in reference to

the door, we have to know something of the fashion of shepherds in the Holy Land at the time of Christ and even at the present day. The sheep-cote was protected and enclosed on all sides, and there was only one opening through which the sheep could enter or come out. Very frequently the shepherd filled up the opening with his own body, and effectively prevented the exit of the sheep, and the entrance of any animal or person hurtful to them. During their stay in the sheepfold through the watches of the night, the shepherd thus literally became the door. Our Saviour compares Himself to this watchful shepherd and makes Himself the very door of the sheep-cote, His Church. And not only that, but He says He is come that His sheep "may have life, and may have it more abundantly."

Nowhere on this earth has any tribe or people been found wholly destitute of religion. For religion is life, and life is religion. Man is a religious animal, because he has a conscience and a knowledge of a Supreme Ruler. "Travel over and take a survey of all countries; ascend to the most remote antiquity: where will you find a nation which has not had some positive religion; which has not believed in communications with the Divinity; which has not also believed itself to hold directly from God a doctrine to be professed, practises to be observed, and rules to be followed? The necessity of revelation must have been very deeply and generally felt indeed, thus to unite the whole human race in one belief. People have varied among themselves on revelation; they have agreed on its necessity. They have altered, obscured, and disfigured the positive teachings of religion; but the conviction of a positive teaching has remained firm among them. This agreement, so prevalent at all times and in all countries, is a solemn acknowledgment, pronounced by the whole human race, of the inability of

reason to fathom religion in its entirety. Does our age not join in an attestation as formal, as constant, and as general as that of all the ages that have preceded it?"¹

Everywhere and at all times there have been temples, altars, sacrifices, vows, and prayers, and that not only among the highly civilized, but with the untutored savage. Man is by nature religious. However, the word itself, as well as the idea, is very vague in the minds of some, even at this late day of revelation and among those who claim to be very civilized.

What, then, is religion? Let me answer in the words of the renowned St. Augustine: "Religion is the bond that unites man with God."² In other words, religion is the intercourse between man and God. It is the sum of the relations that exist between God and man.

Whence does this relation come? It must come from out the very nature of man, and from a positive revelation, sometimes distorted, blurred, and degraded from primitive times and purer knowledge. God is the Creator and man is the creature, but in the course of time sin worked havoc with the human race, and men forgot the true God. They transferred their adoration and allegiance from Him to the creatures of their own imaginations and the works of their hands. As it is said in the Book of Wisdom: "All men are vain, in whom there is not the knowledge of God: and who by these good things that are seen could not understand Him that is, neither by attending to the works have acknowledged who was the Workman: But have imagined either the fire, or the wind, or the swift air, or the circle of the stars, or the great water, or the sun and moon, to be the gods that rule the world."³

¹ Bergier, article "Revelation."

² "De Vera Relig." No. 113.

³ Wis. xiii. 1, 2.

Nature-worship and pantheism became the prevailing religions of the world; everything was deified or everything was God Himself. St. Paul says: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. And they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts, and of creeping things. Wherefore God gave them up to the desires of their heart, into uncleanness, to dishonor their own bodies among themselves. Who changed the truth of God into a lie; and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." ⁴

Maybe there was nature-worship and pantheism upon the earth before the Flood; in any case there was terrible sin, for the Scripture says: "All flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth." ⁵ But after this terrible manifestation of God's anger, we know well that idolatry prevailed and men forgot their Creator. It was to bring men back to God that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ came on earth. It was to restore man to his pristine dignity, to raise him up from the slavery of the devil, that the Second Person of the adorable Trinity humiliated Himself in the Incarnation and came that men "may have life, and may have it more abundantly." And not only that, but He makes Himself the door of the sheepfold, that nothing may enter to hurt or harm the sheep.

From the time of the first revelation, when Adam opened his eyes and in wonder and adoration saw his Creator, until the days when the God-Man walked among men, God revealed Himself in many ways to men.

There can be only one God, one religion, one revelation, for God is truth. The Jews were the bearers of this revelation by the express will of God, but there

⁴ Rom. i. 22-25.

⁵ Gen. vi. 12.

is not the slightest doubt that He made Himself known to others in various ways. And thus through the Jews, and those others, "men of good will," the primitive revelation was never wholly blotted out; God was slowly but surely preparing the way for the Incarnation and for the healing of the deadly wound caused by the original sin. Finally, Christ came and established His religion, and that religion we know to be Christianity.

As we are treating now of religion and its influence upon life, it is not necessary to prove here the divinity of the Christian religion, except to remark that its very existence is one of the greatest of proofs. Cardinal Newman in his inimitable style thus sums up the case for the Church: "Christianity has been long enough in the world to justify us in dealing with it as a fact in the world's history. Its genius and character, its doctrines, precepts, and objects cannot be treated as matters of private opinion or deduction, unless we may reasonably so regard the Spartan institutions or the religion of Mahomet. It may indeed legitimately be made the subject-matter of theories; what is its moral and political excellence, what its due location in the range of ideas or of facts which we possess, whether it be divine or human, whether original or eclectic, or both at once, how far favorable to civilization or to literature, whether a religion for all ages or for a particular state of society, these are questions upon the fact or professed solutions of the fact, and belong to the province of opinion; but to a fact they do relate, on an admitted fact do they turn, which must be ascertained as other facts, and surely has on the whole been so ascertained, unless the testimony of so many centuries is to go for nothing. Christianity is no theory of the study or of the cloister. It has long since passed beyond the letter of documents and the reasonings of individual minds, and has

become public property. Its 'sound has gone out into all lands,' and its 'words unto the ends of the world.' It has from the first had an objective existence, and has thrown itself upon the great concourse of men. Its home is in the world; and to know what it is, we must seek it in the world, and hear the world's witness of it." ⁶

Yes, Christianity is everywhere, and if it be not actually professed by some, yet its influence is felt by all who are civilized or half-civilized. Truly has the blessing given by the Babe in Bethlehem radiated from His crib and embraced the world; truly has His death at Calvary upon the cross purchased liberty for all men. From Him has come Christianity, and it has brought light and liberty into the lives of men. It has transformed the world and infused its influence into all the actions of men. St. John says: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men," ⁷ and He Himself says: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." ⁸ He is the way by which we go, the truth by which we know, and the life by which we live. If we know the way, if we have the truth, if we live the life we are surely "delivered from the servitude of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." ⁹

The Christian religion meets all the requirements of men and fulfils their every desire. It embraces in itself the primitive, or natural, the Mosaic, or revealed, and the last word of God to men through Christ. It is as old as the world and as young as today; it is indulgent and strict; it never changes and yet it is always changing; it is not a philosophy but a life; it is in the market-place and in the cloister; it is in the battle-din and in the harmonious chanting of the Mass;

⁶ "Development of Christian Doctrine," Introd. p. 1.

⁷ John i. 4.

⁸ John xiv. 6.

⁹ Rom. viii. 21.

it has brought forth great saints and saved great sinners; it is everywhere you go and yet you cannot destroy it. On many occasions have powerful men risen up to destroy it, and they dashed their heads against the rock, and were lost in the engulfing waves. Trial, persecution, slander have been as hurricanes beating upon the rock, but the beacon from the lighthouse kept on shining over the angry waters, and calm and peace came with the rising sun.

“Why have the Gentiles raged, and the people devised vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes met together, against the Lord, and against His Christ.”¹⁰ All was of no avail, for Christianity had come to stay, the Lord had founded it and was to be “with it all days, even to the consummation of the world.”¹¹

As religion is the sum of our duties to God, to our fellow-man, and to ourselves, so is Christianity. Religion and Christianity are correlative terms; you cannot have one without the other. Neither can you divorce morality from religion, because the foundation of all morality is religion. It is the fashion in some quarters, and especially in some great centres of would-be learning, to look upon religion merely as an evolutionary process in the forward and upward march of mankind, and to assign it a secondary place or no place at all in education. In some places, and some societies, there is a tabu upon it, as if it were of secondary importance, or something not to be broached in educated or polite circles. But it is impossible to have right education, really polite society, and morality without it, for it is the foundation of all.

Paganism is dead and buried and cannot be brought back to life again. The old pagan gods have passed away, and the cross is now the sign of salvation, and He who died upon it is the king and centre of society

¹⁰ Ps. ii. 1, 2.

¹¹ Matt. xxviii. 20.

and of civilization. It was the sign of the fall of Roman idolatry when it appeared in the heavens to Constantine the Great. "In hoc signo vinces." Under this sign thou shalt conquer, was the legend upon it, and it shall conquer until the end. Christ is the King and His kingdom is Christianity, and that kingdom embraces all truth. "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."¹² There is only one form of truth, and there can be only one form of Christianity. Unity is absolutely the foundation of truth, unity is absolutely the foundation of Christianity. St. Paul says: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all."¹³

In the past much has been written upon Christianity as a dogmatic religion, and no doubt much will be written about it in the future. But what was the command of its Founder to the Apostles? "Going therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."¹⁴ They were to teach what Christ had taught them, and here was the beginning of doctrine and of dogma. If their commission was to teach, it was the duty of others to be taught. They were to teach one set of doctrine, and could neither deviate from it nor allow others to do so. They were not to vary their teachings according to the whims and conceits of the world, but were to go on teaching what Christ had taught them, even unto death. When they were told by the leaders of Judaism "not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus," they replied: "If it be just in the sight of God, to hear you rather than God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the

¹² John viii. 32.

¹³ Eph. iv. 5, 6.

¹⁴ Matt. xxviii. '19, 20.

things which we have seen and heard.”¹⁵ This is the reply of the Church throughout all the ages to a sneering and unbelieving world.

But as a matter of fact, is the Church dogmatic in the sense in which the world would have it? Does she allow no freedom, no debate, no choice? Does she stifle liberty and stultify the human mind? Exactly the contrary is true. There would be no dogmas were the truth not attacked, for all would believe peaceably and quietly. The dogma is the rampart of the truth. There is freedom for all, room for debate, and plenty of choice, provided the truth itself is believed and obeyed. Liberty is increased, and the human mind is truly made wise by simple obedience under the guiding hand of the Church. If ideas clash, and minds disagree, and rancor or danger to souls intervene, she steps over the field of battle, hushing the din, separating the combatants, and with serene majesty and authority brings peace once more. At her command the battle ceases; she knows of what she speaks, her voice rings clear and unmistakable, for it is the voice of Christ.

If dogmas are to be understood as assertions of the truth, then the Church cannot exist without them. Every man who asserts what he believes to be the truth is necessarily dogmatic. If he sincerely believes what he asserts, he would stultify himself were he to believe or state the contrary. Truth is essentially dogmatic and exclusive, it must exclude error. It need not be aggressive or pugnacious, but it must be assertive. A great deal has been said and written by men on the dogmatism of the Church; they have derided, called into question, and gainsaid her claims on this point. In listening to their assertions or reading their writings one is impressed by their own utter dogmatic tone. They talk of their freedom from dogma, and assert it

¹⁵ Acts iv. 19, 20.

in a more dogmatic manner than the Church ever does in her most important pronouncements. There is not such a thing as the right of private judgment, nor the private right of judgment. Our judgments must conform to the truth or suffer the penalty of being wrong. I cannot think except according to the laws of truth. I myself may be deceived; I may make wrong judgments; I may apprehend erroneously, but if I am in invincible ignorance I am not to blame. The madman is perfectly logical in all he does, if we but grant his first principles. It is there where he is wrong. We cannot think as we please. Our thoughts make us what we are. To assert that the Church is dogmatic is to assert that she teaches the truth. To state that she is overbearing, aggressive, or stultifying, is to give utterance to a calumny.

It is the most important thing in the world whether we believe rightly or no. All the actions of life are dominated by our belief. As man is a reasoning animal, so is he a believing one. We must perforce believe something, that is, we must take something on faith. A man without faith is a monster, and such a monster does not exist. The every-day actions, the commonest things of life are dominated by belief. We act as we believe, and we believe as we act. If we do not act according to our belief, or we believe differently from our acts, then we become subjects for either human or divine punishment.

“But apt the mind or fancy is to rove
 Unchecked, and of her roving is no end;
 Till warned, or by experience taught, she learn,
 That not to know at large of things remote
 From use, obscene and subtle, but to know
 That which lies before us in daily life
 Is the prime wisdom; what is more, is fume
 Of emptiness, or fond impertinence
 And renders us in things that most concern
 Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek.”¹⁶

¹⁶ Milton, “Paradise Lost,” Book VIII.

If the mind run hither and thither to every fancy, to every passing thing, then the outcome is only mental disaster and chaos. Free thought in the worldly sense is an absurdity; no man is free to think as he pleases. In the days of Luther and for some time after it was with his followers all a question of belief. If you believed in the merits of your Saviour works amounted to very little. Indeed, to rest upon your works was tantamount to damnation. Nowadays that whole system is changed in the minds of some men; belief is nothing, it is your works that will save you. Both these methods have been enunciated with the greatest dogmatism, and as a fact both are wrong. The Church teaches that "faith without works is dead."¹⁷ Here is a truth, a dogma if you will, taught by the Church always.

On one side we have the vagaries of heretics and the vain opinions of men, and on the other the benign, rational, consistent teaching of the Church. Which is right? The basis of morality is belief, and if belief is erroneous the whole edifice is built on quicksand. This is why the Church insists on right belief, because all our actions are its outcome.

Among the unthinking and the would-be learned there is a wide-spread belief that the more scientific one becomes the more difficulty will he find in believing the dogmas of the Church, and adhering to her practises. There are, no doubt, many difficulties both in science and religion. If we cannot explain the common things around us, how can we fully explain the mysteries of religion? How do we grow? How do we unconsciously change different substances into blood and bone and tissue and flesh in ourselves? What is electricity? What is gravitation? These and a thousand other things have names, but what are they? We

¹⁷ James ii. 26.

know not. Religion, dealing as it does with mysteries, must necessarily have difficulties.

The mysterious opens a vista by following which we shall know more and more. St. Paul very beautifully says: "We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known."¹⁸ We are only children, as it were, in this world, and we see only through smoked glasses. When the curtain is withdrawn then we shall know more, but that will be the other side of the grave.

A thousand difficulties do not make one doubt. The most learned men that ever lived believed in the dogmas and practises of the Church like simple children. St. Augustine and St. Thomas of Aquin gained their knowledge at the foot of the crucifix, and the only regret of the great scientist Pasteur was that he had not the faith of an old Breton peasant woman.

There can be no conflict between science and religion, because God is the author of both. It is only the pseudo-scientists, or the writers in the Sunday supplements of sensational newspapers, that discover any conflicts. Truly does Pope the poet say: "A little learning is a dangerous thing."¹⁹

Modernism and Protestantism as systems are wholly unable to cope with and repel the attacks made on religion, for the simple reason that they have no dogmas, no settled doctrine, no fixed form of belief. In fact, Protestantism as a system of belief is fast disintegrating, rapidly falling to pieces. It has run its course, and is becoming what in the beginning was predicted it would become—rationalistic. As yet it gives a great deal of trouble to the Church, by inculcating error, by poisoning the minds of people, and by open or secret antagonism, but it has no system and appeals not to the minds of seriously thinking men. Whatever of belief

¹⁸ I. Cor. xiii. 12.

¹⁹ "Essay on Criticism."

it has are only the shreds and patches it has torn from the garments of the Church.

We hear a great deal today of efficiency. It is the magic word that opens all doors, for efficiency gives results, and it is results that men now-a-days are looking for. But what is the most efficient thing in the world, if it is not religion? We have experts in engineering, in electricity, in aviation, in science, in medicine and surgery, in sports and games, in the army and navy. There is hardly a calling or trade that has not now its experts. And yet there is no normal, well-regulated life into which religion does not enter. Wherever you go it goes, it is more than your shadow; it is nearer than your wife or children; it is yourself—your very life. It tells you of all your duties to God, to your fellows, and to your own self. You cannot shake it off, and it permeates your very being, like the ether that surrounds and enters all things. You breathe it, as it were; it sustains you in trial and restrains you in victory. It is around you everywhere and you cannot make a move without it. Is not this efficiency?

Religion solves all the practical problems of life, and if it enter not into these problems they become enigmas. The riddle of the universe can be explained only by religion, and without it man is groping in impenetrable darkness. It enters into the home and the senate, the workshop and the parliament, the palace and the hovel. Disaster will come to the country whose rulers and statesmen vainly imagine they can get along without it. Witness Babylon, Persia, Syria, Rome, Jerusalem; they lost religion, and they lost their country too.

The Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the Parables of Christ have an intimate connection not only with individuals but with governments and society. There is not a single individual, family, or government problem that cannot be settled by religion. But the

trouble is that men strive to work without it, and war, famines, suffering, anarchy, and chaos are the result. Look around and see how much religion enters into the governments of this first quarter of the twentieth century. And as it is now, so has it been since the Reformation—or as it is rightly called the Revolution—of the sixteenth century.

Life is a stern reality. Life is the service of God. Any individual, or any state, that strives to eliminate Him will become stunted, maimed, and useless. Life is not for pleasure, but for duty, and we really fulfil it only by patiently bearing trial and suffering. The law of pain enters every life, and that law is obeyed by the help of religion. Take that away and the reasons for living are gone. Nothing remains but discontent, pessimism, and maybe suicide.

Man is not all muscle or bone or flesh; he is a compound of the angel and the animal. His spiritual part is his intellectual, immortal soul. By reason of that he is immeasurably above the brute, and from it a chasm separates him which never can be bridged. By his soul he feels, and sees, and knows, and understands. The lowest savage is a man, and the highest gorilla is but a brute, nothing more.

If society is to be rejuvenated, if society has to have new life put into it, it must come back to religion. Yes, to the religion of the Middle Ages—the ages of faith, of beauty in architecture, and of right living—the misnamed Dark Ages. Then religion entered into the lives of men, and fully flowered and expanded itself in the greatest of all centuries—the thirteenth. Religion must fulfil the physical, the intellectual, and the moral life of man. The triple relationship is fundamental to man. In infancy the animal predominates; the babe simply seeks its food and uses its instincts, the reason is dormant. As it grows the dawning of the intellect takes place, and speech is added, and questions

are asked, because everything is new to the child. The things with which it comes into contact make new, conscious impressions upon it, and it seeks explanations. Finally, the moral life comes into vigor, and duty and responsibility must be taught and explained. This is true not only of the individual born into the most cultured society, but also of the child of the savage. Men are men fundamentally the world over, always and in every grade of life. The babe of the king, born in a palace, is conceived and brought forth exactly as the babe of the savage in the wigwam. And it instinctively reaches out for its food, as later on it co-ordinates things, and lastly its moral life comes into action. No cut-and-dry rule can be given for the beginnings of the intellectual life and the morale of the child. It may commence earlier in some than in others, but commence it will if the child is normal.

Listen to what Cardinal Newman says on this subject. "I grant, of course," he says, "that we cannot assign a date, ever so early, before which he had learned nothing at all, and formed no mental associations, from the words and conduct of those who have the care of him. But still, if a child of five or six years old, when reason is at length fully awake, has already mastered and appropriated thoughts and beliefs, in consequence of their teaching, in such sort as to be able to handle and apply them familiarly, according to the occasion, as principles of intellectual action, those beliefs at the very least must be singularly congenial to his mind, if not connatural to its initial action. And that such spontaneous reception of religious truths is common with children, I shall take for granted, till I am convinced that I am wrong in so doing. The child keenly understands that there is a difference between right and wrong; and when he has done what he believes to be wrong, he is conscious that he is offending One to whom he is amenable, whom he does

not see, who sees him. His mind reaches forward with a strong presentiment to the thought of a Moral Governor, sovereign over him, mindful, and just. It becomes to him like an impulse of nature to entertain it." ²⁰ Now it is that religion steps in to nourish, sustain, and strengthen these primary notions in the child's mind. Its province is to teach him who this Moral Governor is, and why He must be obeyed; what are the helps He gives to obey Him; what are the rewards of obedience and punishment for disobedience.

But the question may be asked: Why does the child, and even more so the grown-up man, have these thoughts? Whence come they? By what authority does religion teach, and what is its origin?

Many men, sincerely or not is beside the question, hold that all these truths of religion come from human sources, and, as it were, through heredity. Denying a personal, almighty, and all-knowing God, or relegating Him to the category of the unknowable, they must necessarily deny any origin for religion except the human. Surely these truths that come to the minds of the learned and the illiterate, the most civilized and the most savage, that are wondered at by the dawning intelligence of the child, and pondered on in mature age—surely these truths have come from God. These truths are primary and universal, have been known by all, and go back to the beginning of man.

There never was a time in which men did not believe in God, there never was a time in which men did not know the difference between right and wrong, there never was a time in which men did not acknowledge an unseen Power capable of judging them. And so, religion is as old as man, religion is wherever man has been or is on this earth. It comes from God, and is the bond that binds man to his Creator. It is incredible that religion is man-invented; for who could think

²⁰ "Grammar of Assent," p. 107.

of and reveal the stupendous truths which it inculcates and nurtures? Who could impress upon me that I am to be ashamed of doing something even when no one sees me? Who can tell me what is right and wrong if there is no eternal principle of right and wrong? Nothing is wrong if there is no religion and no God, and that is the disaster in society today—the landmarks are washed away in the tidal-wave of evil. No religion—no God—no responsibility.

The interior acts of religion are devotion and prayer; the exterior are adoration and sacrifice. Devotion and prayer have been in use by man from the very beginning; adoration and sacrifices have been practised from the earliest dawn. It is true that these have been warped and distorted by some in the course of time, but they have never wholly been destroyed. Men never lost sight of the fact that there was an initial disturbance, that something wrong had happened in the beginning, and there was a universal yearning for a Deliverer.

I do not mean to say that Christianity is the synthesis of all the superstitious practises of savage, pagan, or modern times, but do say that it embraces in itself all that was good among men before its coming and even now. The infancy of religion was from Adam to Moses; the childhood, from Moses to Christ; the manhood, from Christ until the end of the world.

St. Augustine says: "Although the times have changed, although the mystery of the Redemption was formerly announced as future, which is now preached as accomplished, yet faith has not changed on that account. Although, before the coming of the Messiah, the true religion was practised under other names and with other signs than since His coming; although it was then proposed in a veiled and is now exposed in a clear manner, nevertheless, there has always been but one religion, ever the same. That which we do to-

day call the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and has never ceased to exist in the world from the beginning of human existence until the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, when it began to bear the name of Christian.”²¹

This religion is, then, as old as the world, and enters into the minutest details of every one's life. For although there may be in theory indifferent acts, yet in practise few acts are such, but have always some motives prompting them. St. Paul takes the most indifferent acts, and most necessary, and puts a high motive upon them: “Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God.”²² It adapts itself to all classes and conditions of men, and dispenses to them the word of God according to their capacity. It can say with St. Paul: “I give you milk to drink, not meat; for you are not able as yet,”²³ “and you are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that is a partaker of milk, is unskilful in the word of justice: for he is a little child. But strong meat is for the perfect; for them who by custom have their senses exercised to the discerning of good and evil.”²⁴

Christ Himself began to teach His Apostles little by little, and day by day, and gradually molded them till they believed fully in Him and in His Resurrection. And religion is not only for the infancy of the human race or of nations, but it is necessary for their growth, and their arrival at manhood, and maturity. Its symbolism and its sacraments appeal to, and are equally necessary for, the savage and the savant, the illiterate and the learned, the pope and the porter, the king and the kine-keeper.

This religion which so satisfies the heart of man is nothing else but Christianity, and Christianity is Cath-

²¹ *Retract*, Book I. chap. 13.

²² I. Cor. x. 31.

²³ I. Cor. iii. 2.

²⁴ Heb. v. 12-14.

olicism. We cannot say that Catholicism is a branch of Christianity. No, it is the root, or if you will, the tree. "It is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and cast into his garden, and it grew and became a great tree, and the birds of the air lodged in the branches thereof." Whatever of Christianity is outside the Church was taken away from her by those who separated themselves from her—they are only lopped-off branches, and are fast withering away. "I am the vine," said Christ to His Apostles, "you are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing."²⁵

This religion—this Church—has developed from the grain of mustard-seed, which is the smallest of seeds, and was planted by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, until its branches cover the world. It has developed along the same lines, and with the same continuity. The Church of today is the same as the apostolic Church; it is the Church of the early martyrs—of Polycarp, of Irenaeus, of Lawrence, of Agatha, of Agnes, of Lucy. Its doctrines were preached by Chrysostom with surpassing eloquence, by Basil the Great, and Gregory the Holy. Its teaching was promulgated by Gregory the Great from his lofty position as pope, by Ambrose of Milan, and the incomparable Augustine of Hippo. It has indeed developed until it has excited the envy of an evil world and the prayerful wonder of its followers. As the infant grows and waxes strong as the years go by without losing its identity in the full-grown bearded man, so the Church has grown and waxed strong with the strength of God pulsing in her veins without losing her original identity. She was at the manger in Bethlehem, she was at the Crucifixion; she saw her Lord arise glorious from His tomb and ascend into heaven. She heard the world-commission given to the Apostles,

²⁵ Luke xiii. 19. John xv. 5.

and from that time until now her "sound hath gone forth into all the earth," and her "words unto the ends of the world." She "rejoiced as a giant to run the way."²⁶

When the Church first opened her eyes her infant gaze looked out upon a world steeped in sin and idolatry. Rome had conquered the world by force, and she now sat down sated and degraded by her own vices. She had enslaved Greece by her arms, and Greece had enslaved her by her vices. The gods of all the conquered nations were welcomed to her altars, and incense was burned to all their abominations. Vice was deified, and Jupiter the supreme god took the place of the all-holy Creator. Slavery was everywhere and pity and humanity were nowhere. Men lost all idea of religion and morality, and Rome, drunken with vice, was reeling and tottering to her fall.

The pure religion promulgated by Moses was almost blotted out from the minds and removed from the hearts of the Jews by the teachings of the Rabbis, and was subjected to endless quibblings, subterfuges, and mere external ceremonies.

And the Church grew, and grew, and waxed stronger. She permeated this nauseous heap of infamy and sin and changed it from day to day. The Roman Empire rose up against her to crush her in her cradle, but she was protected by Her Founder and escaped. She was "like to leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."²⁷ Like yeast, she sweetened and raised the vast mass of the dough of infidelity, of paganism, and of Jewish ceremonialism.

And when the Roman Empire of the West fell down in a crash, and the barbarian hordes of the North rushed upon her like famished wolves, she saved civilization from the attacks. Yes, and she took those into

²⁶ Ps. xviii. 5, 6.

²⁷ Luke xiii. 21.

the Christendom of the Middle Ages. She, by degrees, abolished slavery and taught men their value before God. She spoke to them, those untutored men, in kind and gentle tones, and raised their thoughts to heaven. And sometimes she raised her voice in warning against disobedience and prepared to fulminate her threats. She showed these turbulent men why they should obey her, and placed before their wondering eyes their crucified Saviour. She raised up woman to her dignity as maiden, wife, and mother and gave her as a model the incomparable Mother of God. To these warriors by nature she used the words of St. Paul: "Stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new, him who is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of Him that created him. Where there is neither Gentile nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free. But Christ is all in all."²⁸ She took them by the hand, baptized them and made them clean, and stood them upon their feet, free men. From the days of the great Apostle of the Gentiles her missionaries have gone to every part of the world carrying the blessings of Christ and the benefits of education and civilization everywhere. She is the patroness of music, architecture, painting, and letters, as witness the Middle Ages, when she held sway. She protected woman against the cupidity and lust of man, and drew round her a magic circle. She uplifted the poor against the tyranny and rapacity of the rich and powerful, and threw open to them all her treasures and all her offices. The poorest man might become pope. She founded and encouraged the knighthood and wonderful chivalry of medieval times. She covered Europe with her schools for the education of the poorest, and the child of the swineherd was equally welcome to the rudiments of education as well as to the profound teachings of

²⁸ Col. iii. 9-11.

her highest universities. She founded and fostered the great universities, and her children crowded to the lectures of her learned professors. Her priests were the great inventors, physicians, surgeons, and lettered men of those times, even as they are the better educated class of today. She built up her true and profound systems of philosophy and theology, from Augustine, the Eagle of Hippo, on and on to Anselm, and Bonaventure, and Thomas of Aquin, the angel of the schools.

The most subtle and dangerous heresies attacked the Church, and she threw them off and became stronger than ever. She never lost anything but had a compensating gain. Luther and St. Thomas of Villanova were in the Augustinian Order at the same time; the one fell away and became the author of all the modern religious troubles; the other remained and became the pattern of charity and the model of bishops. When Europe was convulsed by the religious strifes brought on by the revolution of the sixteenth century, the blessed and great Ignatius of Loyola founded his Society, and his missionaries penetrated to the interior of China and Japan and lived in the wigwams of the American Indians.

Surely Christianity is life, and love, and action. Surely Christianity entered into the daily lives of the early Christians. Surely Christianity permeated the individual and social life of the Middle Ages. It molded the life of the king in his palace and the peasant in his hut. It had full sway in the family as well as in the legislature. It made the common workman a skilled artisan, whose unconscious masterpieces are admired today, and it made the legislator a wise man whose rulings and laws stand to the present time.

This is indeed the religion of life; the religion that does things and does them surely, effectually, and nobly. It does not appeal to secular authority to en-

force laws and make men moral and noble by statutes, for it knows that morality and nobility of soul can come only through it. It does not work spasmodically or hysterically, but proceeds upon its way with calm assurance. It does not cry out against the proper use of any of God's gifts, but is adamant against their abuse. Heresy always runs to extremes, but virtue, as even Cicero says, "is a habit of the mind, consistent with nature and moderation and reason," and true religion takes nature as it is, and uses moderation, and builds upon reason. It takes man as he is, a union of the flesh and the spirit, and builds him up "until we all meet into the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ."²⁹

This religion is historic Christianity, and historic Christianity is the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is the true and perfect religion and is the last word of God to men. There is no continuity of religion or doctrine outside of the Church, and it is the ordinary means by which all men are saved. As in the days of the Flood all men were drowned who were not in the ark, so the same will happen to those who are outside the ark—the Church—through their wickedness and evil lives. Christ did not found His Church that men might come into it or stay out of it as they pleased. The greatest lie of hell is "one religion is as good as another," for then no religion is true.

Listen to what the great Cardinal Newman says of the unity, directness, and consistency of the Church. "History," he says, "is not a creed or a catechism, it gives lessons rather than rules; still no one can mistake its general teaching in this matter, whether we accept it or stumble at it. Bold outlines and broad masses of color rise out of the records of the past. They may be dim, they may be incomplete; but they are definite.

²⁹ Eph. iv. 13.

And this one thing at least is certain; whatever history teaches, whatever it omits, whatever it exaggerates or extenuates, whatever it says or unsays, at least the Christianity of history is not Protestantism. If ever there were a safe truth, it is this.

“And Protestantism has ever felt it so. I do not mean that every writer on the Protestant side has felt it, for it was the fashion at first, at least as a rhetorical argument against Rome, to appeal to past ages, or to some of them; but Protestantism, as a whole, feels it and has felt it. This is shown in the determination of dispensing with historical Christianity altogether, and of forming a Christianity from the Bible alone: men never would have put it aside, unless they had despaired of it. It is shown by the long neglect of ecclesiastical history in England, which prevails even in the English Church. Our popular religion scarcely recognizes the fact of the twelve long ages which lie between the Councils of Nicæa and Trent, except as affording one or two passages to illustrate its wild interpretations of certain prophecies of St. Paul and St. John. It is melancholy to say it, but the chief, perhaps the only English writer who has any claims to be considered an ecclesiastical historian is the unbeliever Gibbon. To be deep in history is to cease to be a Protestant.”³⁰ This was actually written before this great man came into the Catholic Church.

So we see the testimony of the ages—we know that the Church of God is the same from the beginning. She has unity and oneness throughout the world from her foundation; she is holy in her Head, her members, and her doctrine; she is catholic because she is intended to embrace all men; and she has come to us from the Apostles.

The Catholic Church is the mother of gladsomeness, and light-heartedness, she made and she makes her

³⁰ “Development of Christian Doctrine,” Introd. p. 5.

children joyful. Every child of hers that obeys her can say with Isaias the prophet: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God: for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation: and with the robe of justice He hath covered me, as a bridegroom decked with a crown, and as a bride adorned with her jewels."³¹ A great French Catholic writer has well said: "Who are they who reproach religion with being too wearisome? Those who do not practise it. Who are they who reproach the Church for exacting faith in her revealed doctrines? Those who believe the worst fooleries and the most absurd superstitions. Who are they who reproach the Church for not recognizing the dignity of man? Those who claim the monkey for their father, chance for their master, pleasure for their law, annihilation for their end. Who are they who upbraid the Church for being a religion of money? Those who despoil her of her goods with the utmost cynicism. Who are they who accuse the Church of being intolerant? Those who cannot allow any one to hold an opinion differing from their own. Who are they who charge the Church with being an enemy of light? Those who, despising liberty, have closed Catholic schools and driven out the nuns and the religious teachers. Who are they who reproach the Church with being an enemy of the people? Those who, ignorant of history, are persecuting the charitable institutions established by religion. Who are they who indulge with the utmost audacity in violent tirades against the Church and her teachings? Those who know nothing whatever of religion or of what its precepts require."³²

Hers is not the sour visage nor the forbidding code of the Puritan, but the sweet smile and gentle laws of the Catholic. It is indeed a happy religion to live in and a happier one to die in. Listen to what Father

³¹ Isaias lxi. 10.

³² Ferdinand Brunetière.

Faber says on this point much better than I can. "I am for a happy religion," he says, "I see no use in an unhappy, if God gives me my choice. But He has done more than that. He wishes me to be happy in my religion. Nay, He wishes my religion to be the happiness and sunshine of my life. Now, a happy religion means a religion of love. Everything comes easy to love. Thus I am dependent for my happiness on no one but Jesus. My religion makes me happy all the day long."³³

No man is happy without religion, for he is naturally religious. The religion that fills up all man's desires is the Catholic religion, because it gives him the truth. The religion that enters into his every action is the Catholic religion, because it is the life. The religion that shows him the road to heaven is the Catholic religion, because it is the way. The Catholic Church is the mother of the good, the beautiful, and the true, and to the qualities which are more or less in every man she makes her appeal. She respects the conscience of every man and forces no one to act against it. I cannot conclude better than in the words of the eloquent Cardinal Newman. Of all religions outside of the Catholic Church he says: "Not one of them undertakes human nature; none compasses the whole man; none places all men on a level; none addresses the intellect and the heart, fear and love, the active and the contemplative. It is considered, and justly, as an evidence of Christianity, that the ablest men have been Christians; not that all sagacious or profound minds have taken up its profession, but that it has gained victories among them, such and so many, as to show that it is not the mere fact of ability or learning which is the reason why all are not converted. Such too is the characteristic of Catholicity; not the highest in rank, not the meanest, not the most refined, not the rudest,

³³ "All for Jesus," p. 52.

is beyond the influence of the Church; she includes specimens of every class among her children. She is the solace of the forlorn, the chastener of the prosperous, and the guide of the wayward. She keeps a mothers' eye for the innocent, bears with a heavy hand upon the wanton, and has a voice of majesty for the proud. She opens the mind of the ignorant, and she prostrates the intellect of even the most gifted. These are not words; she has done it, she does it still, she undertakes to do it. All she asks is an open field, and freedom to act. She asks not patronage from the civil power; in former times and places she has asked it; and, as Protestantism also, has availed herself of the civil sword. It is true she did so, because in certain ages it has been the acknowledged mode of acting, the most expeditious, and open at the time to no objection, and because where she has done so, the people clamored for it, and did it in advance of her; but her history shows that she needed it not, for she has extended and flourished without it. She is ready for any service which occurs; she will take the world as it comes; nothing but force can repress her. . . . Time and place affect her not, because she has her source where there is neither time nor place, because she comes from the throne of the Illimitable, Eternal God." ³⁴ Amen.

³⁴ "Discourses to Mixed Congregations," p. 252.

ON THE AFFLICTIONS OF THIS LIFE

“Man born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries.” (Job xiv. 1.)

SYNOPSIS

Experience proves the truth of the text.—There must have been some fall in the beginning.—Revelation tells us the reason of suffering.—St. Augustine on the discontent of man.—The emptiness of earthly happiness.—All men have their sorrows.—Thomas à Kempis on tribulation.—We must bear sorrow whether we will it or not.—No one was ever, or will be ever, without it.—Christ and His Mother.—The value of pain.—Utopian schemes to destroy pain.—It cannot be done.—“The Imitation of Christ” on this.—God never sends suffering for itself alone.—A means to an end.—Plausible theories that Christ came to abolish suffering.—What He really did.—The natural tendency to avoid suffering.—What is meant by pain.—Happiness the result of pain.—St. Augustine on pain.—Pain is a sign of life.—The bearing of pain for God’s sake.—The Christian ascetics.—What is meant by the crucifixion of the flesh.—Patience under insult and affront.—Meekness not understood by the world.—St. Augustine on why the wicked are allowed.—Thomas à Kempis on bearing our cross.—Philanthropy and pain.—Christianity and pain.—Charity and pain.—Cardinal Newman on the world and the cross.—Sin and pain.—St. Augustine on this point.—Afflictions are always for our good.—Various subterfuges of some on pain.—To suffer or to die.—Murmurs and complaints.—Various crosses of life.—Christ is our only Friend.—Those whom Christ loves must suffer most.—Father Faber on impatience with ourselves.—No one should inflict pain needlessly.—The mercy of God in sending pain.—Few can stand prosperity.—What we think violent pain.—Imagination and pain.—On bearing pain patiently.—Borrowing trouble.—Trouble to others.—Christ is our standard.—Final prayer from David.

NEVER was a truer saying uttered by man than this spoken by the inspired mouth of holy Job. It is proven by the experience of mankind from the beginning until now, and will prove true until the end of

the world. Only a person with none, or very limited, experience would doubt its truth, because all men are in agreement that afflictions, sorrows, and pains are the normal conditions of this present life.

Something must have gone wrong, there must have been done something evil in the beginning, there must have been a fall from something higher. Even the pagans of old had some glimmering of this, as well as the pagans and infidels of today. Revelation gives us the key to the knowledge. Without it we would be groping in a world of darkness, and vaguely wondering why it is that trials, afflictions, and pain are the lot of man on earth. God has so ordained that no one is exempt from affliction and pain. There is no such thing as perfect contentment on earth. The moment we think it is ours that moment it vanishes from our grasp. It is, as the poet says:

“Like Dead Sea fruit that tempts the eye,
But turns to ashes on the lips.”¹

Nothing in this world will content us, because, as St. Augustine beautifully says, we were made for heaven, and nothing short of that will fill all our desires. “Thou awakest us to delight in Thy praise: for Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it repose in Thee.”²

“Take all the pleasures of all the spheres,
And multiply each through endless years,
One minute of Heaven is worth them all.”³

Happiness on earth is only like a bubble and is dissipated in a moment. Men imagine that riches will give all that they desire, but the more they have the more they want. The poor dream that if they had only half of the riches which they know others to have,

¹ Moore, “Lalla Rookh.”

³ “Lalla Rookh.”

² Confessions, Book I. No.

they would have perfect happiness, and desire no more. Grandeur has its heart-aches, obscurity its humiliations and trials. The rich have their sorrows, the poor their afflictions. Those who are apparently the happiest have their own secret trials; and the pope as well as the king, the highest as well as the lowest, the financier and the laborer, all have to bear pain and sorrow and trouble. Pain may be of different kinds; it may be the racking torture of the body or it may be the agonizing torture in the mind. But in one way or another the lot of man on earth is that of many miseries. We may retire into the quiet and solitude of the cloister, but trouble of mind or body will follow us. We may go out into the open, crowded places of the world, and trouble will follow us like our shadow. We may seek solace in dissipation, and yet it will dog us persistently; or we may strive to get it by a life of moderation, and yet plainly hear the patter of its feet like a hound following the scent.

As says Thomas à Kempis: "Wherever you are, wherever you turn, you are miserable, save when you turn to God. Why are you so disturbed when things succeed not with you as you so dearly wish? Who is there that has all things to suit his will? Not I, not you, not any man on earth. There is no one in the world without some tribulation or distress, king though he be or pope. Who is there that is best off? Surely he who can bear something for God."⁴ That is perfectly true. It is only when we bear trials for God that they become less burdensome. Bear them we will have to, whether we wish it or not. Our cross will be laid upon our shoulders, whether we carry it in imitation of Christ or not. For the law of life is the law of pain, and as well might we strive to stop the sun in his course as change this law. No one ever was exempt from it, nor ever will be. The highest and the lowest,

⁴ "Imitation of Christ," Book I. chap. 22.

the saint and the sinner, Jesus Christ and His holy Mother, all had sufferings and pains.

All men bear witness to the fact that this is true. The selfish and the unselfish, that is, he who lives for himself alone and he who dedicates his life to the service of others, are equally subject to pain, and sorrow, and trouble. The former imagines that by closing himself up in the armor of selfishness he can avoid or render harmless the darts of his adversary; the latter, by exposing himself to the fire of the enemy only makes himself a more easy mark. But both fly from and fight against the same thing, pain and sorrow.

No life is worth the living that has not its complement of pain. It is a strange truth, but nevertheless it is a truth, that pain and afflictions fill the measures of life, and by a paradox, make it happy. It is true since the day of the primeval fall, when God said to Adam: "Cursed is the earth in thy work; with labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken";⁵ it is true today, and will be to the end.

St. Paul says: "We know that every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain, even till now."⁶ By that he means that there is a perpetual instability in all things tending to corruption and defect, and that this was brought about by sin. Not only man, but animals and the earth itself suffer from the effects of sin, and the only surcease will be when we shall have obtained "the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body."⁷

Utopian and chimerical schemes, and systems of philosophy may be thought out, and fondly put into prac-

⁵ Gen. iii. 17-19.

⁷ Rom. viii. 23.

⁶ Rom. viii. 22.

tise only to be abandoned later on for others more impracticable. No, it can not be done. Learning, science, all ancient as well as modern devices, cannot change the law. The epicurean may sing his song, surrounded by boon companions, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die": the stoic may steel himself against pain, but to both it will come, and more abundantly to the former.

"Arrange and order everything to suit your will and views, and you will always find something you must bear, and so a cross you will ever find. For either in your body you will meet with pain, or in your soul will bear trouble of spirit."⁸ Do what you will, go where you will, you are yet your own self, and because of that you cannot avoid trouble. You carry yourself around with yourself, and as you are a microcosm, the great world, or macrocosm, is reflected within.

Suffering of any kind is useless in itself, and God never sends it merely for its own sake. The idea that the all-holy, all-loving God should inflict pain or sorrow on any of His creatures is a thing to be utterly reprobated. He never sends it simply for the sake of suffering, but in order that something higher, something better should come out of it. Suffering is useless, but it is in the patient bearing of it that it becomes highly useful and meritorious. The atonement of Christ upon the cross was not looked upon by His Eternal Father with gloomy or saturnine satisfaction, but was received by Him in compensation for our disobedience and as the greatest testimonial of His love. The agony, the pain, the degradation, were not undertaken merely for themselves, but as a means to something higher. Christ "humbled Himself, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."⁹ "For it became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are

⁸ "Imitation of Christ," Book II. chap. 12.

⁹ Phil. ii. 8.

all things, who hath brought many children into glory, to perfect the author of their salvation, by His passion. For in that, wherein He Himself hath suffered and been tempted, He is able to succor them also that are tempted.”¹⁰

Christ is not a philanthropist who bore His sufferings in order that we should have none. But He is the eternal Son of God, who bore His sufferings to teach us how to bear ours. His death upon the cross by no means takes away ours, but it helps us to bear the cross and makes it the lighter. He Himself has said: “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For he that will save his life, shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for My sake, shall find it.”¹¹

Yes, the cross must be carried if we wish to be followers of Christ, but if we try to imitate a fretful, peevish, discontented world we shall have indeed the cross, but shall gain no merit, and shall lose our life in the bargain.

It is very plausible to say that Christ came to take away pain and sorrow. We know from the gospels that whenever affliction was presented to Him He relieved it and comforted the sufferer. We read that “Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom: and healing all manner of sickness and every infirmity among the people. And His fame went throughout all Syria, and they presented to Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and such as were possessed by devils and lunatics, and those that had the palsy, and He cured them.”¹² This is indeed perfectly true, but there is a higher truth which He inculcated in His preaching of the kingdom, and that is the bearing of suffering for the love of God. It

¹⁰ Heb. ii. 10, 18.

¹² Matt. iv. 23, 24.

¹¹ Matt. xvi. 24, 25.

was impossible that disease should come into contact with Him without being cured; it is impossible that sorrow borne for the love of Him cannot be endured.

Were we mere animals, and not men, suffering would have a different complexion, but we have the gift of reason, which indeed will not take away pain, but will tell us how to bear it, and will teach us "that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us."¹³ For, as is well said in "The Imitation of Christ": "In this life of misery all our peace must rather lie in humble suffering, and not in callousness to things that go against us. The man who knows how to bear suffering best will enjoy the greatest peace. He is the conqueror of himself, and lord of the world, Christ's friend, and heir of heaven."¹⁴

The natural tendency of man is to avoid pain, and affliction, and sorrow. But at the present day especially this has been erected into a cult. Modern humanitarianism seeks to supplant the cross and put in its place a system of philanthropy that would take away all pain. It strives to humanize the teaching of Christ, namely, that pain is an evil in itself and is to be abolished. Whereas the teaching of Christ is divine, that pain is not an unmitigated evil, that borne with resignation to the divine will it becomes productive of much good. By pain I mean all sorrow, trouble, temptations, and anxiety of mind, as well as all afflictions of the body.

Let us suppose the impossible, as far as man is concerned in his present condition. Suppose that there was no sorrow of mind, nor pain of body, there would be really no happiness. For although it may seem a paradox, happiness results from pain. Pain purifies the heart and makes it more fit to enjoy life. Pain prepares the way for pleasure, for if we had nothing all

¹³ Rom. viii. 18.

¹⁴ Book II. chap. 3.

the time but pleasure the pleasure would become intolerable pain. As when we work and physically exert ourselves the muscles are exercised, so too when we bear pain of any kind are exercised the faculties of the soul. When pain of mind or body ceases danger may be lurking; it may be the loss of conscience or it may be atrophy of the members. A dead conscience or a dead body feels no pain.

Says St. Augustine: "Pain which some think a primary evil, whether of mind or body, cannot even exist except in bodies retaining some soundness. For that which offers resistance, so as to suffer, after a manner refuses to cease to be what it was, having been to a degree good; but when it is constrained to something better, the pain is useful, when to the worse, useless. But evils without pain are worse; for it is worse to rejoice in iniquity than to feel pain for corruption. So in the body a wound with pain is better than putrefaction without pain, which especially is entitled corruption."¹⁵

The soul to which pain never comes by the commission of evil deeds is truly in a bad way; the body which is numb is entering upon the coma of death. And so pain is a sign of life; it is the semaphore which warns us of danger, and bids us to put on the brakes and go carefully. If we pay no attention to the signals we are heading for disaster here and hereafter. As a great poetess has well said:

"Do not cheat thy Heart and tell her,
 'Grief will pass away,
 Hope for fairer times in future,
 And forget today.'
 Tell her, if you will, that sorrow
 Need not come in vain;
 Tell her that the lesson taught her
 Far outweighs the pain."¹⁶

And "The Imitation of Christ" very beautifully says:

¹⁵ "De Natura Boni," chap. ¹⁶ Adelaide A. Procter.

“Though a man have manifold afflictions, he is not without the support of consolation. For from the very suffering of his cross he feels the greatest good accrues to him. For while he makes himself bow down to it, all the burden of his trials is turned to trust in comfort from on high. And the more the flesh is worn by suffering, the more the spirit is strengthened by the grace within.”^{16a}

This is the reason why the ascetics in the Church practised severe mortification, as they do so yet. They did so not solely for the pain it gave, but as the very word tells us, to exercise themselves, as a means to an end, and the end was happiness, happiness here and hereafter. It is true that the world of their time looked upon Anthony, Pachomius, Simeon Stylites, Basil the Great, and others as fools. But were they such fools as it would have us think? Take it in one sense, length of life. They lived much longer than those who pampered themselves and gave themselves up to worldly pleasure. And what was true then is true now: more die of gluttony than of starvation. And the ascetics got more pleasure in general out of life than those who laughed at them. They were not morose, nor cranky, but full of sweetness and the milk of human kindness. Their pains made them pleasant to all the world, and that is why they are saints and models. The great ascetic St. Paul was glad to say: “With Christ I am nailed to the cross. And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me.”¹⁷ “And they that are Christ’s have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences.”¹⁸ To crucify the flesh is to bear temptations bravely and overcome them manfully. To crucify the flesh is to suffer the pains and torture of sickness patiently. To crucify the flesh is to be gentle under affront and insult, and to put up with sneers and gibes.

^{16a} Book II. chap. 12.

¹⁸ Gal. ii. 24.

¹⁷ Gal. ii. 19, 20.

It is hard to obey the orders of ignorant tyrants in shops and stores, it is hard to be meek and gentle under undeserved nagging and picking, it is hard to be kind to those who despise us and belittle us; but our divine Lord says: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land."¹⁹ It is very easy to be valiant with the meek, very easy to be boisterous with the gentle; but again our Lord says: "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake: Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven."²⁰

The world, of course, looks upon all this as sheer nonsense. It regards the meek as sneaks, it looks upon the gentle as small-souled, it considers the obedient for God's sake as sycophants. And all this surely brings pain and sorrow of body and mind. Can a man be happy under these conditions? He can, if he does what Christ says, for nothing can touch his soul. The Jews were very valiant when they blustered around Pilate and forced him to condemn Jesus; they were very valiant when they saw Him upon the cross, and in derision taunted Him to come down from it, but their valor and bluster ceased at the Resurrection. The question could be asked: why does God allow this? Why are the meek brow-beaten and the haughty with heads erect? Why do those who try to serve God suffer apparently—and yea, really—more than those who care for nothing? Ah! the answer to that is very difficult and very easy, according to the way you look at it. It is very difficult if you have no faith, it is very easy if you have.

St. Paul, writing to his disciple Timothy, tells him of some of his persecutions, and then goes on to say: "And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution."²¹ That is the answer; those who

¹⁹ Matt. v. 5.

²⁰ Matt. v. 11, 12.

²¹ II. Tim. iii. 12.

strive to do well must perforce meet opposition, and the opposition means pain, trouble, and affliction.

Then again St. Augustine says: "Think not that wicked men are in this world for nothing, or that God does no good with them. Every wicked man lives, either to repent, or to exercise the righteous." ²² The goodness of God is shown in either case, for He bears with those who give trouble in order that some time they may be converted, or He allows the evil in order that the good may be exercised by it, and may ultimately receive a reward.

"Therefore, the cross is always ready, and at every turn awaits you. Run where you please, you cannot shun it; for everywhere you take yourself along with you, and you shall always find yourself. Above, below; within, without; turn where you will, you shall always find the cross, and you must needs be patient everywhere, if you would have peace within, and merit the everlasting crown. Bear the cross willingly, and it will carry you, and lead you to the longed-for goal, where there shall be an end of suffering, though it will not be here. Bear it unwillingly, you make of it a burden for yourself, loading yourself the more; and still you must bear it. Throw one cross away, and surely you will find another—perhaps a heavier one." ²³

Philanthropy will never take away pain; it may indeed try to assuage it, but so does Christiānity. Philanthropy looks upon pain as an intolerable burden, Christiānity teaches us to bear it. Philanthropy wishes to put a heaven on earth, Christiānity raises earth to heaven. It is one thing to pity the poor, and the sorrowful, and the painful from the comfortable depths of an arm-chair; it is a totally different thing to teach the poor, and the sorrowful, and those in pain by the example of bearing afflictions ourselves. "I am

²² Treatise on Ps. liv. 1.

²³ "Imitation of Christ,"
Book II. chap. 12.

the way," said Christ, and He showed us that He was by bearing His sufferings.

Christianity is not sentiment merely, nor gush, nor effusion: it takes things as they are, tries to better them if they be wrong, or makes us more patient with the will of God. The world is influenced by sentiment; it laughs and weeps, almost in the same breath. The idol of today is in the dust tomorrow: the hero of the hour is discarded in the next; the principles of the time are suddenly changed for whims. You cannot relieve pain, suffering, and sorrow by founding a hospital or throwing a copper to the poor. No, no; there is a great deal more than that to be done, and it can be done only by Christian charity. "Charity," says St. Paul, "is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."²⁴ This is the virtue that relieves all afflictions, and they that have it, although they are poor, are rich; although sorrowful, are joyful; although in pain, are happy. The world cannot understand this; it sees the fact and is amazed, but yet will not learn.

Let Cardinal Newman speak in his own inimitable perspicuity and style. "The world judges," he says, "of God's condescension as it judges of His bounty. We know from the Scripture that the 'teaching of the cross' was in the beginning 'foolishness' to it; grave thinking men scoffed at it as impossible, that God, who was so high, should humble Himself so low, and that One who died a malefactor's death should be worshipped on the very instrument of His execution. Voluntary humiliation they did not understand then, nor do they now. They do not, indeed, express their re-

²⁴ I. Cor. xiii. 4-7.

pugnance to the doctrine so openly now, because what is called public opinion does not allow them; but you see what they really think of Christ, by the tone which they adopt towards those who in their measure follow Him. Those who are partakers of His fulness are called on, according as the gift is given them, whether by His ordinary suggestion, or by particular inspiration, to imitate His pattern; they are carried on to the sacrifice of self, and thus they come into collision with the maxims of the world. A voluntary chastity, voluntary poverty, voluntary obedience, vows of perfection, all this is the very point of contest between the world and the Church, the world hating it, and the Church counselling it. 'Why cannot they stop with me?' says the world; 'why will they give up their station or position, when it is certain they might be saved where they are?' Here is a lady of birth; she might well be useful at home, she might marry well, she might be an ornament to society, she might give her countenance to religious objects, and she has perversely left us all; she has cut off her hair, and put on a coarse garment, and is washing the feet of the poor. There is a man of name and ability, who has thrown himself out of his sphere of influence, and he lives in a small room, in a place where no one knows who he is, and he is teaching little children their catechism.' The world is touched with pity, and shame, and indignation, at the sight, and moralizes over persons who act so unworthily of their birth or education, and are so cruel towards themselves. And, worse still, here is a saint, and what must he do but practise eccentricities?—as, indeed, they would be in others, though in him they are but the necessary antagonists to the temptations which otherwise would come on him from the 'greatness of the revelation,' or are but tokens of the love with which he embraces the feet of his Redeemer. And here again is another, and she submits her flesh to penances

shocking to think of, and wearies herself out in the search after misery, and all from some notion that she is assimilating her condition to the voluntary self-abasement of the Word. Alas, for the world! which is simply forgetful that God is great in all He does, great in His sufferings, and that He makes saints and holy men in their degrees partakers of that greatness." ²⁵

And on the other hand, how much grief, sorrow, and pain are brought about by personal sin? Look around you and see the suffering by drunkenness, by lust, by greed. Who can stop this? Can the world assuage the grief of the drunkard's wife and children? Can it alleviate the terrible diseases brought on the innocent by impurity? Can it recompense the poor and the robbed for evils done by injustice under the shadow of the law? Only God can do these things. "Blessed are they," says Christ, "that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." ²⁶ And St. Peter says: "What glory is it, if committing sin, and being buffeted for it, you endure? But if doing well you suffer patiently: this is thankworthy before God." ²⁷

Sin, not only original, but the actual sins of men, brought sorrow, and grief, and pain to the Son of God. It was the cause of the downfall of nations and the wiping out of civilizations. Cruelty, lust, drunkenness, greed caused the fall of ancient civilizations. The Babylonian, the Persian, the Syrian, the Grecian, the Roman empires fell through sin, and the sin of sins was committed by the leaders of the Jews when they cast out and crucified their Saviour. Yes, we blame God for our troubles, and they are only of our own making, half the time. There would not be half the trouble and pain in the world if there were no per-

²⁵ "Discourses to Mixed Congregations," p. 313.

²⁶ Matt. v. 10.

²⁷ I. Pet. ii. 20.

verted free-wills. God sends not affliction for its own sake, but He allows it to come when we bring it upon ourselves. Fire will burn, water will drown, hunger will gnaw, and just as surely will sin bring its own punishment here and hereafter. In more senses than one the words of St. Paul are true: "the wages of sin is death."²⁸

Listen to what St. Augustine says: "I know not how it is, that when aught of evil befalls a man, he runs to accuse God, when he ought to accuse himself. When anything goes well with you, you praise yourself; when anything ill, you accuse God. This, then, is a crooked heart, not a right and straight heart. If from this crookedness and wrongness you be made right and straight, that which you did before shall be converted to just the contrary. But what did you before? You praised yourself in the good things of God, you accused God in your own evil things: when your heart is converted and made right, you will praise God in His good things, accuse yourself in your own evil things."²⁹

And so we see that God sends afflictions and pains, but they are always good; we bring troubles and trials upon our own selves by sin, and they are punishments. And then we grumble and find fault, and are ingenious in our excuses for not bearing what God sends us. We complain that our cross is too heavy to bear, that God is overloading us, and that human nature cannot stand it. We forget what St. Paul told the Corinthians: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able: but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it."³⁰ To be tempted is to be tried, as the very word means, and God tempers the trial to the

²⁸ Rom. vi. 23.

²⁹ On St. John's Gospel, Sermon XXVIII. No. 7.

³⁰ I. Cor. x. 13.

capacity of the person. The same great Apostle gives a list of some of the terrible sufferings of mind and body which he underwent for the sake of Christ, and tells us he asked God to remove from him a particularly heavy trial. And what was God's answer? "My grace is sufficient for thee: for power is made perfect in infirmity." And what was the reply of the Blessed Paul? "Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For which cause I please myself in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ. For when I am weak, then am I powerful." ³¹

When we complain that we are weak and cannot withstand the shocks of affliction, misfortune, and pain, do we not give evidence of want of faith? The strong have not much need of exercise, and it is only by the exercise of our faculties that we become strong. Were we to allow any of our members or limbs to remain idle for some time we should find that when we came to use them they would be atrophied or dead. Use is life, exercise is life, and so pain is life, because it brings into action our faculties. The cry of the great ascetics was, "To suffer or to die." The man who suffers patiently conquers nobly, for St. Paul says: "We glory also in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience trial, and trial hope." ³²

It is a sign rather of corruption of heart, and not of its natural shrinking from pain and sorrow, when we break out into murmurs and complaints at our afflictions. Who felt pain, and insult, and afflictions more than Christ? In His human nature He shrank from suffering, but His holy will embraced it, yea even to the bitter end—the cross: "Father, if Thou

³¹ II. Cor. xii. 9, 10.

³² Rom. v. 3, 4.

wilt, remove this chalice from Me: but yet not My will, but Thine be done.”³³ Listen to the great St. Augustine. “If you covet bodily rewards from God, you are still under the law, and therefore you shall not fulfil the law. For when you see those temporal things granted to those who offend God, your steps falter, and you say to yourself: Behold I worship God, daily I run to church, my knees are worn with prayers, and yet I am constantly sick; there are men who commit murders, who are guilty of robberies, and yet they exult and have abundance: it is well with them. Was it such things that you sought from God? Surely you did belong to grace. If, therefore, God gave you grace, because He gave freely, love freely. Do not for the sake of reward love God; let Him be the reward. Let your soul say, ‘One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. That I may see the delight of the Lord, and may visit His temple’ (Ps. xxvi, 4). Do not fear that your enjoyment will fail through satiety: such will be that enjoyment of beauty that it will ever be present to you, and you shall never be satisfied; indeed you shall always be satisfied, and yet never satisfied. For if I shall say, you shall not be satisfied, it will mean famine; and if I shall say you shall be satisfied, I fear satiety; where neither satiety nor famine are, I know not what to say, but God has that which He can manifest to those who know not how to express it, yet believe that they shall receive.”³⁴

No matter what we do we will have to undergo pain. The very fact of our being Christians means that we have to go against our inclinations if we wish to be consistent. If we cannot bear the pains and trials that God sends for our exercise, how shall we be able to

³³ Luke xxii. 42.

³⁴ On St. John's Gospel Tract. III. No. 21.

bear the trials of keeping the Commandments? It certainly is painful to forgive injuries, to speak well of those who try to ruin our character, to do good to those who hate us, and it is none the less painful to conquer pride, or lust, or self-seeking. It is strength not to be arrogant in prosperity nor to be cast down by adversity. When we have plenty it shows our character if we are detached from the riches of the world and are above them; when we have nothing we can show we are strong by being content. In all his afflictions Job said: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord so it is done: blessed be the name of the Lord."³⁵ Oh, if we could only from our heart re-echo these words, what a different appearance life would have! It is very easy to speak of and praise the goodness of God when everything comes our way; it is very easy to be a saint when nobody worries or bothers us. But let God send pain, let people cross us, then we change our tune, and our song instead of being an alleluia becomes a dirge.

It is surely a great cross to have given our confidence, yea, even our affection and love, to one whom we considered a friend and to find out that he has been false and deceitful. It is a great pain to find our friendship traded upon, and even turned to our own disadvantage, but even that can be borne with equanimity. Christ Himself suffered this from the ungrateful Jews, and we cannot expect any better treatment. The open enemy we know; he is at least honest about it, but the secret enemy, who tries to ruin you under the guise of friendship, ah, there is the pain and the cross! You have been deceived, you have been used, you have been betrayed; it is hard to bear the cross.

David prophesied of Christ in this very matter, and

³⁵ Job i. 21.

I quote his words. "If my enemy had reviled me, I would verily have borne it. And if he that hated me had spoken great things against me, I would perhaps have hidden myself from him. But thou a man of one mind, my guide, and my familiar, who didst take sweetmeats together with me: in the house of God we walked with consent." ³⁶ Alas! such is the false friend, and many are to be found. And when we do find them, we are tempted to throw up our hands in despair, and say that nothing is true. "To whom then will you fly, whom will you seek for as a friend? Without a friend you cannot well live; and if Jesus be not your friend above all others, you will be sad and desolate! Thus you are acting as a fool, if you trust in any other or rejoice in him. You had better choose to have the whole world set against you than Jesus offended. Of all, then, that are dear to you let Jesus only be your special love." ³⁷

We may have friends, and they may never cause us affliction nor pain, but the only real, true friend is Jesus Christ our Lord. He will never deceive, He will never use us, He will never betray us. If the whole world were shook to pieces, if we were deceived and afflicted and pained, if we seemed to be going down in the bitter waters of tribulation, we have the rock of ages—Christ the Lord—and ultimately good will come out of it all. We can think of the words of David. "Thou art He that hast drawn me out of the womb: my hope from the breasts of my mother. I was cast upon Thee from the womb, from my mother's womb Thou art my God, depart not from me. For tribulation is very near; for there is none to help me." ³⁸ "In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted: let me never be confounded." ³⁹ Those whom Jesus loved

³⁶ Ps. liv. 13-15.

³⁸ Ps. xxi. 10-12.

³⁷ "Imitation of Christ,"
Book II. chap. 8.

³⁹ *Te Deum.*

the most were the most afflicted. One would think, judging by earthly standards, that He would, as it were, take care of His own, that He would make their lives prosperous and full of earthly blessings. And yet we see the contrary. His own holy Mother was poor, and practically unknown. Her life was full of sorrows and trials. When she offered her Son in the Temple the holy priest Simeon prophesied of Him and of her in these words: "Behold this Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed."⁴⁰ From that moment until the day of the Crucifixion that prophecy was true, more and more. And the same thing is true of St. Joseph, of the Apostles, and of all saints and good men. It is well written in the Book of Proverbs: "My son, reject not the correction of the Lord: and do not faint when thou art chastised by Him: For whom the Lord loveth, He chastiseth: and as a father in the son He pleaseth Himself."⁴¹ The sufferings of Mary were next to her Son's the greatest, therefore He loved her more than all beside. He felt her pain very keenly, and she felt for Him the greatest pangs, and yet both suffered patiently, because such was the will of God.

Thus should we bear pain and sorrow, because it is the will of God, for nothing comes to us without His permission. The rebuff, the sneer, the bad insinuation, the false friend, the injury to body or goods, the temptations to evil, all are allowed by Him to exercise us. He will help us if we ask Him to bear these trials patiently. And He will help us to be patient with ourselves. As Father Faber beautifully and truly says: "If it is a hard thing to be patient with others, how much harder is it to be patient with

⁴⁰ Luke ii. 34-35.

⁴¹ Prov. iii. 11, 12.

ourselves! Indeed, so much is this branch of virtue neglected, that we seem almost to think its opposite a merit, as if impatience with self were a heroism of a meritorious mortification. There is a vast difference between hatred of self and impatience with self. The more of the first we have the better, and the less of the last. Once let us surmount the difficulty of being patient with ourselves, and the road to perfection lies clear and unobstructed before us.

“But what do we mean by impatience with self? Fretting under temptations, and mistaking their real nature, and their real value also:—In actual sin being more vexed at the lowering of our own self-esteem than being grieved at God’s dishonor:—In being surprised and irritated at our own want of self-control because of our subjection to unworthy habits:—Being depressed because we experience lively movements of anger or give way to fits of sadness, even where, as is possible, there is no sin, either in the one or the other:—Being annoyed with our own want of sensible devotion, as if it was at all in our power, and as if patience in dryness was not just the very way to earn sweetness and spiritual consolation:—Being disquieted because we do not find the remedies we have applied to our faults act as we expected, forgetting that they need time, and that we often put secret obstacles in the way. To these symptoms we add a sort of querulousness about the want of spiritual progress, as if we were to be saints in a month.”⁴²

It is never allowable to inflict pain or sorrow willingly for its own sake upon any man, and they who do so are guilty according to the gravity of the offense. We do not wish others to pain or afflict us, let us observe this wish as regards them. The golden rule of our Lord should have place here and measure our

⁴² “Growth in Holiness,” p. 115.

lives: "As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner."⁴³

Neither should we inflict unnecessary pain on animals, nor be cruel to them, for although God gave to man "dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth,"⁴⁴ that does not mean that he can be cruel to them or treat them unmercifully. Beasts indeed have no rights; they were created for the use of man, but not to be abused. Cruelty even to animals shows the calibre of a man, and eventually works evil to him. The Book of Proverbs well says: "A merciful man doth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel casteth off even his own kindred."⁴⁵

God is truly merciful to us in sending pain, and trial, and disappointments, for the vast bulk of men cannot stand prosperity. It sets them mad, it brings on discontent, it makes them a burden to themselves and to society. Your city magnate rolling to his palace in his expensive limousine is not half so contented as he was when he trudged through slush and snow with his dinner-pail in his hand to his happy home. The great financier as he looks at the young clerks in his offices sometimes thinks of the happy days when he was like them, care-free. Yes, prosperity brings trouble, and worry, and care. A modest competence with contentment brings peace and happiness, for "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." Some men and women are blessed with robust health, and they use it only for self-gratification. Some men and women are, I may say, blessed with sickness and deformity, and they use them only for the glory of their God. Of what use is robust health if it lead to hell? Many a man in robust health has suddenly

⁴³ Luke vi. 31.

⁴⁴ Gen. i. 26.

⁴⁵ Prov. xi. 17.

died, and in sin; many a man in sickly health has lived for years and been saved.

It is true that violent pain while it lasts occupies all our thoughts. But who is in violent pain all the time? The shock of what we think violent pain is so great that feeling is much allayed. Men have had an arm or a leg torn off and did not feel the loss at the time. A great deal of what we consider horrible, unbearable pain is not in reality such to the sufferer. Workmen are blown to pieces by an explosion in a powder factory, men and women are fearfully mutilated in a railway accident, soldiers are torn to shreds by bombs in war, and it is only the work of a second, they were dead in the twinkling of an eye. We imagine a great deal concerning pain in man and animals because we transfer it to ourselves in dissimilar circumstances. And the same can be said of sorrow and trouble of mind.

It is wonderful how much we can bear if we only ask God to help us, and take the cross as it comes. How often do we hear men say when a calamity or disaster which they thought would kill them had passed that it was the best thing which could have happened to them?

We borrow a great deal of trouble, and make ourselves miserable without any reason or cause, and make it miserable for others too, for some seem to be happy only when they make unhappiness for others. If we would pay less attention to our aches and pains of mind and body, we would be stronger in every way.

“But the nearer the dawn the darker the night,
And by going wrong all things come right;
Things have been mended that were worse,
And the worse, the nearer they are to mend.”⁴⁶

St. Paul assures us in these words: “And we know

⁴⁶ Longfellow, “Tales of a Wayside Inn.”

that to them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be saints.”⁴⁷ And, again, he says: “For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.”⁴⁸

Yes, the hungrier a man is the more does he relish food, the more wearied, does he long for rest. And so, the more pain and trouble and trial here, the more should be the longing for heavenly comfort and ease. When our Lord appeared on the evening of the Resurrection to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, He opened to their wondering hearts all that the prophets had spoken concerning Him, and said: “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so enter into His glory?”⁴⁹

And so should it be with us. If we suffer, we shall conquer; if we bear patiently, we shall reign; if we imitate Christ, we shall be crowned. St. Peter calls upon us: “Be you humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in the time of visitation: casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you.”⁵⁰

How much pain and sorrow would we avoid if we should put into practise this advice of the holy apostle! It is by its rejection that we are miserable and fretful. It is our own self-love that causes us so many cares, and pain, and heart-aches. We pamper ourselves too much, and so cannot stand the chill winds of sorrow and suffering. If we gave less thought to our ailments of mind and body we would be better able to bear them. If we put in the balance our sins and our sufferings we can easily see which weigh the heavier.

Let me conclude with the beautiful prayer of David: “Be Thou unto me a God, a protection, and a place

⁴⁷ Rom. viii. 28.

⁴⁸ Rom. viii. 18.

⁴⁹ Luke xxiv. 26.

⁵⁰ I. Pet. v. 6, 7.

of strength: that Thou mayest make me safe. For Thou art my firmament and my refuge. Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the sinner, and out of the hand of the transgressor of the law and of the unjust. For Thou art my patience, O Lord: my hope, O Lord, from my youth. By Thee have I been confirmed from the womb: from my mother's womb Thou art my protector. Of Thee shall I continually sing: I am become unto many as a wonder, but Thou art a strong helper. Let my mouth be filled with praise, that I may sing Thy glory: Thy greatness all the day long." ⁵¹ Amen.

⁵¹ Ps. lxx. 3-8.

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ¹

“O all ye that pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow.” (Lam. i. 12.)

SYNOPSIS

The ends for which Jesus died are most worthy of our consideration.—The wonderful mystery of Christ’s death.—The cross.—An outline of the sufferings of Christ.—The difficulty of preaching on Christ’s Passion.—The power of the cross.—God as Creator and Redeemer.—Chronological order of Christ’s Passion.—Jesus and Pilate.—Pilate a politician.—A study of Herod.—Barabbas preferred to Christ.—The innocence of Jesus proclaimed by His judge.—The meeting of Jesus and Mary.—Our sins and the Passion.—The Crucifixion.—The penitent thief.—The reproaches.—Symbolism connected with the Passion.—Jesus’ last cry.—Final appeal.

WE are assembled here today to commemorate, in union with the whole Church, an event unparalleled in the history of the world. We are come with sorrow in our hearts to lament and weep over a scene the like of which never happened before nor will ever come to pass again. We are here to contemplate the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and our God.

Nature may teach us to deplore the loss of a tender parent, to bemoan the death of some dear friend, and our sorrow is the greater in proportion to our love and their merits. But when we come to meditate upon the awful sufferings of the God-Man; when we think of all He has done and borne for us; when we know

¹ This sermon can be used for the Three Hours’ Agony on Good Friday.

that His sufferings and death, even as His love and goodness, infinitely surpass our finite and feeble comprehension, then must we say from the innermost recesses of our hearts that tears are but feeble tokens of the grief we owe Him and words mere empty sounds. Oh, that I had the tongue of the angel of the Incarnation, the blessed Gabriel, who assisted at these terrible scenes; that I had the heart of Mary the Mother of God, of John the Divine and of Mary Magdalen the penitent, who stood beneath the cross, to bring to your minds and touch your hearts with words of burning love for the anguish and desolation of soul and the pangs and sufferings of the body of Him who hung thereon.

There is nothing in the whole revealed series of the mysteries of God more worthy of our consideration, more capable of inflaming our hearts with His love, and inspiring us with a hatred and detestation of sin, than to know that our Saviour Jesus died for love of us, and that our sins were the cause of His awful sufferings. "A great number of men live and die without reflection at all upon the state of things in which they find themselves. They take things as they come and follow their inclinations as far as they have the opportunity. They are guided mainly by pleasure and pain, not by reason, principle, or conscience; and they do not attempt to interpret this world, to determine what it means, or to reduce what they see and feel to system. . . . Now, let me ask, what is the real key, what is the Christian interpretation of this world? What is given us by revelation to estimate and measure this world by? The event of this season—the Crucifixion of the Son of God. It is the death of the Eternal Word of God made flesh, which is our great lesson how to think and how to speak of this world. His cross has put its due value upon everything which we see, upon all fortunes, all advantages,

all ranks, all dignities, all pleasures; upon the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. It has set a price upon the excitements, the rivalries, the hopes, the fears, the desires, the efforts, the triumphs of mortal man. It has given a meaning to the various, shifting courses, the trials, the temptations, the sufferings, of his earthly state. It has brought together and made consistent all that seemed discordant and aimless. It has taught us how to live, how to use this world, what to expect, what to desire, what to hope. It is the tone into which all the strains of this world's music are ultimately to be resolved." ²

This is the mystery which the Church of God commemorates today; a mystery which astonished the heavens, confounded hell, changed the noon-day sunlight into the darkness of night, raised the dead from their graves, and made the very rocks quake and burst asunder with fear. It is the mystery of the outpouring of grace, and mercy, and salvation to those who receive it well and profit by it, but a mystery of malediction and of damnation to those who scoff at it and reject it. "For none can get over the sea of this world unless he be borne upon the cross of Christ." ³ It is the mystery of the humiliation, ignominy, and torment of God. It is the mystery of the Holy of Holies presented to our view, not in a state of grandeur, power, and majesty, but in a state of poverty, apparent powerlessness, and abjection. He was charged with the crimes of the world, abandoned by all, given up to the rage and fury of His enemies, and sacrificed for the redemption of mankind. The prophecy of David was truly fulfilled in Him: "I am a worm, and no man: the reproach of men, and the

² Newman, "Plain and Parochial Sermons," vol. vi. p. 83.

³ St. Augustine, On St. John's Gospel, Tract. II. No. 2.

outcast of the people. All they that saw Me have laughed Me to scorn: they have spoken with the lips and wagged the head.”⁴ His innocent and immaculate flesh was torn by the terrible scourges, His adorable head was crowned with cruel thorns, His holy eyes were dimmed by blood and tears. He—the Word of God—was treated as a fool, and finally nailed as an evil-doer to the wood of the cross. “From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness therein: wounds and bruises and swelling sores: they are not bound up, nor dressed, nor fomented with oil.”⁵

Behold in the scantiest of outlines the sufferings of God. If there be anything in the world calculated to touch the heart of man, surely it ought to be the recollection of all that Jesus suffered for him. How can I find words in any way adequate to portray these sufferings, convey them to your minds, and thereby to your hearts? It is only by trusting to Jesus and looking up to His cross that we hope to be able to do that which unaided we could never accomplish. Here we behold an excess of love and an excess of hate; never was there more meekness on one hand and more cruelty on the other. He who gives life and being to the universe was crucified by those who lived by His power and goodness; the Creator was put to death, and His own creatures were His merciless executioners. They exerted their malice to destroy Him; He made use of their crimes to save them. “For Christ’s blood was so shed for redemption of all sins, that it had power to blot out the very sin by which it was shed.”⁶

We are sometimes inclined to look upon the death of Christ more as a mystery of God’s apparent weakness and infinite abasement than as a mystery of His

⁴ Ps. xxi. 7, 8.

⁵ Isaias i. 6.

⁶ St. Aug., On St. John’s Gospel, Tract. XCII. i.

infinite power; the world regards the cross as folly, but by that cross God has set forth His infinite wisdom. "For the word of the cross, to them indeed that perish, is foolishness; but to them that are saved, that is to us, it is the power of God." ⁷

That God should act as Lord and Master of the universe, that He should with a word create heaven and earth, that He should work prodigies and that nothing could resist His will and power, is something so natural to Him that it is hardly a subject of wonder in us. But that this self-same God should suffer and die in shame and hatred is a thing that excites our most profound astonishment, and that man should return to God by the cross, after having for so long a time gone astray by pride, is surely a wonderful mystery of its triumph over the world. "Look around, and see what the world presents of high and low. Go to the court of princes. See the treasure and skill of all nations brought together to honor a child of man. Observe the prostration of the many before the few. Consider the form and ceremonial, the pomp, the state, the circumstance, and the vain-glory. Do you wish to know the worth of it all? Look at the cross of Christ.

"Go to the political world; see nation jealous of nation, trade rivalling trade, armies and fleets matched against each other. Survey the various ranks of the community, its parties and their contests, the strivings of the ambitious, the intrigues of the crafty. What is the end of all this turmoil? The grave. What is the measure? The cross.

"Go, again, to the world of intellect and science; consider the wonderful discoveries which the human mind is making, the variety of arts to which its discoveries give rise; the all but miracles by which it shows its power; and next, the pride and confidence

⁷ I. Cor. i. 18.

of reason, and the absorbing devotion of thought to transitory objects, which is the consequence. Would you form a right judgment of all this? Look at the cross.

“Again, look at misery, look at poverty and destitution, look at oppression and captivity; go where food is scanty and lodging unhealthy; consider pain and suffering, diseases long and violent, all that is frightful and revolting. Would you know how to rate all these? Gaze upon the cross. Thus in the cross, and Him who hung upon it, all things meet; all things subserve it, all things need it. It is their centre and their interpretation. For He was lifted up upon it, that He might draw all men and all things unto Him.”⁸

“This is how the folly of God is wiser than man, and His weakness stronger. How is it stronger? It is stronger in that it spread over the whole earth and seized all men by force, and whereas thousands and thousands did their utmost to stamp out the name of the crucified One, just the contrary came to pass. For this Name took root and was propagated all the more, whereas they were destroyed and consumed, and living men fighting a dead One gained not a stroke. Consequently when a heathen tells me that I am a fool, he proves that he himself is doubly one; inasmuch as considered by him to be a fool, I appear wiser than the wise; and when he calls me weak, he shows himself to be weaker. For publicans and sinners set up those very things by the goodness of God which philosophers and orators, and despots, and the whole world vainly striving with all its might could not even devise. What, indeed, has the cross not introduced? The belief concerning the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body, the despising of present

⁸ Newman, “Plain and Parochial Sermons,” vol. vi. p. 85.

things, the desire of eternal. And it made angels out of men, who practise everywhere the philosophy of all endurance.”⁹

Nothing is better calculated to bring clearly before our minds the true meaning of Christ’s sufferings and death, and the consequent benefit to the human race, than to follow the story of that awful tragedy as given us by the Evangelists. The Last Supper was finished. Our Lord had changed the bread and wine into His adorable body and blood and had given command to His Apostles to perpetuate in His Church this great gift. “Knowing that His hour was come that He should pass out of this world to the Father: having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end.”¹⁰ And arising from the table He abases Himself in a most wonderful manner, for, after the manner of a common slave, He girds Himself with a towel, and kneeling down He washes the feet of the Apostles, even those of Judas, and wipes them with the towel wherewith He was girded.¹¹

In the house of Simon the leper Mary Magdalen, braving contempt and sneers, had bathed His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair; and now this same gentle Lord and Master, who forgave her sins, gets down on His knees and washes the feet of sinners, even those of him who will be known throughout all time as the most perfidious betrayer that ever lived. Jesus had warned him of his treachery and had called him to repentance before it was too late to draw back. He seemed not to be able to divert His mind from the awful crime He knew the apostle was about to perpetrate. “He was troubled in spirit; and He testified, and said: Amen, Amen, I say to you, one of you shall betray Me. The disciples therefore looked one upon another, doubting of

⁹ St. John Chrys., Hom. on I. Cor. xiv.

¹⁰ John xiii. 1.

¹¹ John xiii. 5.

whom He spoke. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, and said to him: Who is it of whom He speaketh? He therefore leaning on the breast of Jesus saith to Him: Lord, who is it? Jesus answered: He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped. And when He had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the morsel Satan entered into him. And Jesus said to him: That which thou dost, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew to what purpose He said this unto him. For some thought because Judas had the purse that Jesus had said to him: Buy those things which we have need of for the festival day: or that he should give something to the poor. He therefore having received the morsel went out immediately. And it was night."¹²

Such is the unadorned, brief, and masterly record of an event wonderful in its charity and love for the perpetrator of the greatest crime in history—the betrayal for thirty pieces of silver of the Creator of the universe. Judas knew well what he was doing and yet He whom he was betraying did not betray him to the others at the table, but rather gave him a terrible warning: “Woe to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed. It were better for him if that man had not been born. And Judas that betrayed Him, answering, said: Is it I, Rabbi? He saith to him: Thou hast said it.”¹³

Yes, Judas was the man; he knew that our Saviour was aware of his perfidy: he had been called to the Apostolate, he had seen on many occasions the wonderful works of his Master, and had experienced the many proofs of His loving kindness; but his avarice—the sin of the world today—had made him blind, stolid, and unimpressive. “He was a thief, and hav-

¹² John xiii. 21-30.

¹³ Matt. xxvi. 24, 25.

ing the purse, carried the things that were put therein." ¹⁴

The Last Supper was now drawing to a close, everything that had been appointed by Moses in memory of the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt, and that had been observed from his time until now, was fulfilled; the Blessed Sacrament had been instituted, and the Apostles consecrated bishops and pastors of souls. And now Christ made His last will in the beautiful discourse of peace and love, given for all time by St. John: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: Not as the world giveth, do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. . . . This is My commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you. . . . You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and have appointed you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit: and your fruit should remain: that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it you." ¹⁵ And then He sent up to His eternal Father His last most efficacious prayer for His disciples, and for all those who would come after them and believe in His Name. "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me: because they are Thine. And all My things are Thine, and Thine are Mine: and I am glorified in them. And now I am not in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in My name whom Thou hast given Me: that they may be one, as We also are. . . . And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me: That they may all be one as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee: that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." ¹⁶

Then having sung the great hymn of Hallel, or

¹⁴ John xii. 6.

¹⁵ John xiv. 27; xv. 12, 16.

¹⁶ John xvii. 9-11; 20, 21.

thanksgiving, the little band arose from the table and went out into the night. They wended their sad and sorrowful way to the garden of Gethsemani, where the olive, fig, and pomegranate trees cast their hospitable shade and where Jesus was accustomed to pray. The rays of the full moon shed their silvery light over the garden, bringing out clearly the trees and the surrounding objects and making deeper and more somber the shadows. "Then Jesus saith to them: All you shall be scandalized in Me this night." And then He quoted the prophecy of Zacharias: "I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed." ¹⁷

Only too truly would that prophecy be fulfilled. Nothing disturbed the solitude of the garden save the frightened whisperings of the little band who entered it. Across the other side of the brook the city lay, buried in sleep, save for the occasional barking of a dog, for it was the midnight hour. The minarets and towers and golden roof of the temple were bathed in the silvery effulgence of the full moon, and stood out in clear contrast and relief from the roofs of the dwellings below.

Hardly had Jesus entered the garden than the awful throes of the impending agony came upon Him, creeping over Him like the chill of death or the fire of a terrible fever. Peter had sworn his loyalty, and had been warned: "Amen I say to thee, that in this night before the cock crow, thou wilt deny Me thrice." And then speaking to all of His disciples He said: "Sit you here, till I go yonder and pray." ¹⁸ Our Saviour then took with Him Peter, James, and John under the black shadows of the olive trees, into the darkest part of the garden. Never before had they seen Him plunged into such sadness as now came over Him. His soul seemed to be seized with the terror

¹⁷ Matt. xxvi. 31.

¹⁸ Matt. xxvi. 34.

of a man who has the vision of some awful object before his eyes. How different it is now from the day when these same Apostles had seen Him transfigured upon the mountain: "And His face did shine as the sun; and His garments became white as snow." ¹⁹

Now His cry is for even human sympathy: His human nature seems as it were to reach out for help and lean upon the assistance of His own creatures. What a terrible agony it must have been that wrung from the lips of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death: stay you here, and watch with Me! And going a little farther He fell upon His face, praying, and saying: My Father, if it be possible let this chalice pass from Me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt. And He cometh to His disciples and findeth them asleep, and He saith to Peter: "What! could you not watch one hour with Me?" ²⁰

And He went back a second time and a third time to pray for help to His Father. "My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, Thy will be done." ²¹ Never before had the Eternal Father heard a more fervent prayer for the accomplishment of His divine will, and never again will He hear its equal. Adam sinned by disobedience, Christ saved us by obedience, as St. Paul tells us: "As by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners: so also by the obedience of One, many shall be made just." ²² This is fully presented to us by the prayer of our Lord in the garden, offering to do the will of His eternal Father: "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross." ²³

¹⁹ Matt. xviii. 2.

²⁰ Matt. xxvi. 38-40.

²¹ Matt. xxvi. 42.

²² Rom. v. 19.

²³ Phil. ii. 8.

“And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony, He prayed the longer. And His sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground.”²⁴ Those whom He took with Him, on whom He relied to watch with Him, had fallen asleep: Peter, who a short time before said he would follow Him to death; James, despite his courage, and even John the well-beloved, were sleeping the sleep of oblivion, whilst He who gave them His body and blood a few hours ago, and who was about to give up His life for them, was racked with tortures of mind.

As our Saviour lay upon that ground in such an agony that His heart's action was so violent as to cause His sacred blood not only to course more swiftly through His veins, but even to burst through the pores of His body, so some fearful revulsion was taking place in His soul. He saw before Him in horrible review all the sins of the human race, from Adam's disobedience and Cain's sin of murder on and on down through the centuries. Impurities of all kinds, idolatry, injustice, down to this bitter agony; the crime of His own murder and all the sins until the end of the world were before Him, and He became the willing victim for their atonement.

No wonder He was horrified, no wonder His Sacred Heart was disturbed, no wonder He sweated blood, no wonder He seemed to succumb to the frightful burden. The whole power of hell was let loose upon the innocent Lamb of God; it hoped with the weight of all the wicked deeds and thoughts of the past and the future to crush Him down; before His eyes was the whole empire of evil, far up and down the ages; the blood of Abel; the unnatural crimes of Sodom and Gomorrhah; the scandals, oaths, and curses; the drunkenness, the sacrilegious profanation of His precious

²⁴ Luke xxii. 43, 44.

body and blood and of the other Sacraments; the scoffs and sneers against Himself and against His Church—all, all were before Him in that awful hour. Wave after wave of agony surged over Him, until they well-nigh submerged Him in the awful flood. And He drank the chalice to the bitter dregs, but the strain was so terrible that the blood poured out from His sacred body, saturating His garments and standing out in great, large beads upon His sacred brow.

In the garden of Eden the human race was poisoned by the pride of Adam; in the garden of Gethsemani the human race was saved by the antidote of Christ's humility. In the garden of Eden death was brought into the world; in the garden of Gethsemani life was brought into the world. In the garden of Eden the devil is victorious; in the garden of Gethsemani the devil is defeated; in the garden of Eden began universal corruption; in the garden of Gethsemani began universal regeneration.

After His awful ordeal, and with the full resolution in His heart to go through to the bitter end, He came to His sleeping Apostles, and woke them up, saying: "Rise, let us go: behold he is at hand that will betray Me. As He yet spoke, behold Judas, one of the twelve, came and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the ancients of the people. And he that betrayed Him gave them a sign, saying: Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He, hold Him fast. And forthwith coming to Jesus, he said: Hail, Rabbi. And he kissed Him. And Jesus said to him: Friend, whereto art thou come? Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus, and held Him."²⁵

The quiet of the garden was broken by the noise and tumult; torches and lanterns flared and glinted,

²⁵ Matt. xxvi. 46-50.

showing the arms and accouterments of the soldiers. The Saviour of the world, stepping out from the shade of the olive trees, stood a wonderful Figure in the full moonlight, and His voice rang out, sadly, clearly, and courageously: "Whom seek ye? They answered Him: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith to them: I am He. And Judas also, who betrayed Him, stood with them. As soon therefore as He had said to them: I am He, they went backward and fell to the ground." ²⁶

Terrified by the power of Jesus and the majesty of His bearing and words, they recoiled and fell prostrate at His feet. In the depth of His sufferings and humiliations, and in the clutches of His foes, He decrees how far their violence must go, and they must abide by His decision. In that hour He gave Himself up freely and willingly. Many a time before had His enemies determined to capture Him, but He escaped out of their hands, for His hour had not yet come. But now this is the time decreed by Himself in which He would give Himself up to die. "When I was daily with you in the temple, you did not stretch forth your hands against Me; but this is your hour and the power of darkness." ²⁷

Even then He healed one of the men whose ear Peter struck off with his sword. Then the Apostles, leaving Him, fled away and He was alone with His enemies. Judas had done his work; Judas had earned his money! Well might Christ reproachfully address him: Judas, dost thou betray Me who have been so good to thee? Dost thou betray Me who have shielded thee so often? Dost thou deliver Me to be slain who have so recently given thee My body and blood in holy Communion? Oh! surely it were better for thee that thou hadst never been born; better for thee that the ground should open and swallow thee up rather than

²⁶ John xviii. 4-6.

²⁷ Luke xxii. 53.

thou shouldst sell thy Saviour and thy God for a slave's price!

Never was such an awful crime perpetrated before; perpetrated by one who was an apostle and a bishop in the Church; perpetrated by one who had been in the school of Jesus Christ, and taught by the Master personally; perpetrated by one who had sacrilegiously profaned the Holy Eucharist. His crime was awful beyond human conception, yet Jesus held out to him mercy and pardon. "Judas was ordained in mortal sin; and after his first Communion, Satan entered into him. For three years he had breathed an atmosphere of sanctity without being sanctified. What should have been for his salvation became an occasion of falling; and the life of the world was turned by him into death."²⁸ His heart was hardened by avarice, for he was a thief. When he found that Jesus did not deliver Himself from His captors, wild with despair and remorse, he rushed back to the priests and the ancients crying: "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. But they said: What is that to us? look thou to it. And casting down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and went and hanged himself with a halter."²⁹

After the disciples had fled away the soldiers bound Jesus with cords and pushed and dragged Him into the city of Jerusalem, where the chief priests, Annas and Caiphas, were waiting to go on with His mock trial. "The high-priest therefore asked Jesus of His disciples and His doctrine. Jesus answered him: I have spoken openly to the world: I have always taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither all the Jews resort: and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why asketh thou Me? ask them who have heard what

²⁸ Manning, "The Eternal Priesthood," p. 28.

²⁹ Matt. xxvii. 4, 5.

I have spoken unto them: behold they know what things I have said.”³⁰

For this noble and courageous answer, by which Jesus took the high-priest’s mind off everything else and fastened it upon His divine person and doctrine, the Saviour of the world received a blow in the face. “Answerest thou the high-priest so? Jesus answered him: If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou Me?”³¹

O wonderful patience and meekness of God! the Creator was struck in the face by a creature! It is almost incredible were it not vouched for by the testimony of the inspired writer. “If we bethink us who He was that received that blow, should we not wish either fire from heaven to consume the smiter, or for the earth to cleave asunder and swallow him up, or that he should be caught up and whirled away by a demon, or smitten with whatever suchlike or any even more dreadful punishment? For what was there of all these that He could not by His power have commanded, by whom the world was made, were it not that He chose rather to teach us the patience by which the world is overcome?”³² No word of reproof came from the judge for this open and awful insult to the accused at the bar of justice, but he hurried Him away bound to the court of his son-in-law, the high-priest Caiphas. This is the same man who in his malignity had uttered a prophecy a few days before to the plotting priests gathered in council: “You know nothing. Neither do you consider that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this he spoke not of himself, but being the high-priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation.”³³

³⁰ John xviii. 20, 21.

³¹ John xviii. 22, 23.

³² St. Aug. On St. John’s

Gospel, Tract. CXIII. 4.

³³ John xi. 49-51.

The court over which presided Caiphas, and before which Jesus was now brought, was the highest court of ecclesiastical justice for Jews throughout the world. In derision of our Lord's request that they should interrogate his hearers, they summoned various witnesses in order to go through the farce of proving Him guilty, but notwithstanding all their cunning, their witnesses contradicted themselves, openly perjured themselves, and the prosecution was falling to the ground. During the whole trial Jesus never opened His mouth to defend Himself; not a single word escaped from His lips, but He allowed contradictions of His accusers and the confusion of His judges to have full sway.

They had often heard Him say that He was the Son of God; they were well aware of the miracles by which He proved His claim; they could not accuse Him of sin; so all witnesses failing, Caiphas put to Him the test question. "And the high-priest rising up in the midst, asked Jesus, saying: Answerest Thou nothing to the things that are laid to Thy charge by these men? But He held His peace, and answered nothing. Again the high-priest asked Him, and said to Him: Art Thou the Christ the Son of the blessed God? And Jesus said to him: I am. And you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming with the clouds of heaven. Then the high-priest rending his garments, saith: What need we any further witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy. What think you? Who all condemned Him to be guilty of death?"³⁴

It must be borne in mind that this the Supreme Court of the Jewish religion, under the presidency of the Chief Justice of that court, confronted the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God. They had so debased the law of Moses, given them by this same

³⁴ Mark xiv. 60-64.

Son of God, they had so forgotten the promises made to His people, they had so ignored the prophecies concerning Him, which He had fulfilled before their eyes, that they condemned by a supreme judicial act the very One who came to save them.

No one will ever know nor comprehend in this life the extent of the indignities and tortures Jesus underwent during that awful night. The Evangelist veils in general terms the horrors of that terrible night: "And the men that held Him, mocked Him, and struck Him. And they blindfolded Him and smote His face. And they asked Him, saying: Prophecy, who is it that struck Thee? And blaspheming, many other things they said against Him." ³⁵

Let those who spend sleepless nights, racked and tossed by pain, think of the awful agony of Jesus during that night. Think of what an outrage it is for a man to spit in another's face, and they spat in the face of the eternal Son of God. No greater insult could be offered, no more contemptuous thing done, and yet He bore it all to teach us humility and meekness and forbearance under much less provocation, and to give courage and strength to the martyrs. Well was the prophecy of Isaias fulfilled by Him. "I have given My body to the strikers, and My cheeks to them that plucked them; I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me, and spit upon Me." ³⁶

Worse than all the trials Jesus had hitherto undergone came the denial of the head of the Apostles. Peter, who had sworn that he would follow Him to prison and even to death, now had put himself in the occasion of sin and miserably denied his Master on the accusation of a young servant-girl. He who had been warned by his Master, and he who trusted so much to his own powers, now, not only once, but repeatedly under oath said, "I know not what thou sayest. And

³⁵ Luke xxii. 63-65.

³⁶ Isaias 1. 6.

immediately, as he was yet speaking, the cock crew. And the Lord turning looked on Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, as He said: Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And Peter going out wept bitterly.”³⁷

“Behold the prediction of the Physician is fulfilled; the presumption of the sick man is brought home to him. For not that came to pass which Peter had told of himself, I will lay down my life for Thee, but that did come to pass which the Lord had foretold, ‘Thou wilt deny Me thrice.’”³⁸

What must have been that look which Jesus gave to Peter. It was mingled with reproach, sadness, and threat; it was the reproach that struck the heart of the apostle, and the recollection of all that reproach implied caused him to weep bitterly. He never forgot that look, and until the day of his death, when, an old man, he was crucified with his head downwards, he lamented his denial of his loving Master. He suffered where is now the high altar of the grandest church ever created by the genius of man, and over his body—the body of the poor fisherman of Galilee—is built that altar, and in the towering dome above it are the words of His Master: “Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”³⁹

At last the morning dawned and the Chief Council determined to deliver Jesus to the jurisdiction of Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor. He was rudely dragged out bound with cords, and exhausted after the sleepless agony of the night, stood in the presence of him who then represented the pagan civil Roman government. Pilate had frequently heard of the wonderful works of the Holy Captive who now stood alone, meek, patient, and manacled before him. Not a single

³⁷ Luke xxii. 60-62.

³⁸ St. Aug. On St. John's

Gospel, Tract. CXIII. 5.

³⁹ Matt. xvi. 18.

complaint did Jesus make of the barbarous treatment that had been given Him.

Picture to yourselves this remarkable scene: For the Jews "went not into the hall, that they might not be defiled, but that they might eat the pasch,"⁴⁰ "for they had begun to keep the days of unleavened bread, during which days it was defilement for them to enter the dwelling of one of another nation. O impious blindness! They would be defiled, forsooth, by a dwelling which was another's, and not be defiled by a crime which was their own! They feared to be defiled by the prætorium of an alien judge, and feared not to be defiled by the blood of an innocent brother."⁴¹

Outside there is the noise and tumult of the mob; here it is quiet, and the Holy Captive and the Governor are alone. See Jesus as He stands in front of Pilate; His hair is dishevelled, His garments are disarranged, His hands are bound, His face and beard show the marks of the blows and the spittle, but yet He is courageous and majestic. Look at Pilate with his closely-cropped hair and clean-shaven face after the Roman fashion; his well-arranged dress sits well upon his figure, and shows him to be a man of health and of fine living, who has slept well the night before. And Jesus looks into the Governor's eyes, and he lowers them before the searching glance of his God. All the superstitious fears of the Romans, in this the time when decadence was fast setting in upon the empire, filled his mind: he had never seen the like of this Man before. He could not bear alone the majestic and wonderful silence of the God-Man, and hurriedly leaving Him he went out to the Jews and asked them: "What accusation bring you against this Man? They answered and said to him: If He were not a

⁴⁰ John xviii. 28.

⁴¹ St. Aug. On St. John's Gospel, Tract. CXIV. 2.

malefactor we would not have delivered Him up to thee. Pilate therefore said to them: Take Him you, and judge Him according to your law. The Jews therefore said to him: It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.”⁴²

“Let those be questioned and make answer, who are delivered from unclean spirits, the sick that are made whole, the lepers that are cleansed, the deaf that hear, the dumb that speak, the blind that see, the dead that rise again, and, that which surpasses all, the fools that are wise; let these say whether Jesus be a malefactor.”⁴³

Pilate thought he could release Jesus from the grasp of the Jews, and that by sending Him to Herod he could accomplish his design, or at least throw the burden off his own shoulders. Like many a politician today he tried to serve two masters; he knew well that no case could be made out against Jesus, and that the Jews had delivered Him through malice and envy; but when they threatened him with the civil power of Rome he fell miserably and became the most unjust judge of all time.

After he had asked the Jews for their accusation against our Lord and had received their vague indictment, “Pilate went into the hall again and called Jesus, and said to Him: Art Thou the King of the Jews. Jesus answered: Sayest thou this of thyself, or have others told it thee of Me? Pilate answered: Am I a Jew? Thy own nation, and the chief priests, have delivered Thee up to me: what hast Thou done?”⁴⁴ The judge asks the accused to condemn himself—“What hast Thou done?” Surely this is a travesty of all law procedure. Jesus declares that He is a king, but a king not of this world; His crime is in being a king, and that was the principal accusation made against Him by the Jews.

⁴² John xviii. 29-31.

⁴³ St. Aug. On St. John's

Gospel, Tract. CXIV. 3.

⁴⁴ John xviii. 33-35.

And now the jurisdiction is transferred to another court, and the gentle, uncomplaining Son of God is dragged into the presence of Herod. This is the crowned ruffian, the son of him of the same name who slaughtered the children in hopes that he would catch Jesus and put Him to death when He was an infant. For the inquiry of the Wise Men was: "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?"⁴⁵ The son was like his father, cruel, rapacious, and a debauchee; he had put John the Baptist to death as the reward for a lascivious dance given by the daughter of the incestuous woman with whom he was living. And he had the head of the holy man, dripping with gore, borne in upon a dish, and carried around the table for the delight of those who were at the banquet.

This is the man before whom, as His judge, Jesus now stood, and Herod was delighted, for he imagined that our Lord would perform some wizard tricks before him. "And he questioned Him in many words. But He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and the scribes stood by, earnestly accusing Him. And Herod with his army set Him at naught, and mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment, and sent Him back to Pilate."⁴⁶

O Christians, behold your Saviour, mocked by His judge and clothed in the white garment of a fool! He is the Son of the Eternal Father: "Who being the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the Majesty on High."⁴⁷ O wonderful work of God, how can we sound the depth of such humiliation!

Again Pilate tries to save the innocent Lamb of God from death, for "calling together the chief priests,

⁴⁵ Matt. ii. 2.

⁴⁶ Luke xxiii. 9-11.

⁴⁷ Heb. i. 3.

and the magistrates, and the people he said to them: You have presented unto me this Man, as one that perverteth the people; and behold I, having examined Him before you, find no cause in this Man in those things wherein you accuse Him. No, nor Herod neither. For I sent you to him, and behold, nothing worthy of death is done to Him.”⁴⁸ And thus we see that both His judges wholly acquitted Him of all wrong-doing. But then a most infamous thing occurred: He is innocent; I find no case can be made against Him: “I will chastise Him therefore, and release Him.”⁴⁹

O the blindness of men! typified in this weak, blind, vacillating judge. Why chastise Him if He is innocent? Why punish Him if He is not guilty? Pilate was weak. The Jews took advantage of his weakness, and made him condemn an innocent Man—the eternal Son of God—to death. He tried to do the impossible. “No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other, or he will sustain the one and despise the other; you cannot serve God and mammon.”⁵⁰

The Jews threatened to report Pilate to the Roman emperor; his natural love of justice, his knowledge of the wonderful method of Roman law procedure, his human pity and the warning of his wife, all, all were forgotten and he miserably fell, unjustly yielding to the mob rule. “You have a custom that I should release one unto you at the pasch; will you, therefore, that I release unto you the King of the Jews? Then cried out they all again, saying: Not this Man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.”⁵¹

And so they preferred the robber to Him who had given all blessings, all gifts, and all prosperity to their

⁴⁸ Luke xxiii. 13-15.

⁴⁹ Luke xxxiii. 16.

⁵⁰ Matt. vi. 24.

⁵¹ John xviii. 39, 40.

nation, and thirsted for His blood after the manner of wild beasts.

“We blame you not, O Jews, for liberating the guilty during the Passover, but for slaying the innocent; and yet unless that were done, the true Passover would not take place. But a shadow of the truth was retained by the erring Jews, and by a marvellous dispensation of divine wisdom the truth of that same shadow was fulfilled by deluded men; because in order that the true Passover might be kept, Christ was led as a sheep to the sacrificial slaughter.”⁵²

And then took place the terrible punishment of the scourging; stripping the immaculate Son of God, they bound Him by His wrists to a pillar, so low that He had to stoop over. Then the soldiers gathered around Him with whips in their hands, and raising their brawny arms in the air they brought down the scourge with a hissing sound upon the naked body of the God-Man. The instrument of torture was made of three leathern thongs, each loaded with pointed barbs of lead. Imagine you are standing in that court-yard with that jeering, hooting crowd; see the men, strong, brutal, pitiless, eager to satisfy their cruel thirst for His blood; hear the swish of the scourges as they come through the air, and the dull thud as they strike His flesh; blow after blow succeeds one another in quick preciseness; see how at every cut from the horrible lash the skin is raised in ragged furrows, and the flesh and sinews are writhing under the awful torture. At last the blood spurts forth and the scourges are now dripping with it, and make a dull, sickening, moist sound as they continue to fall. The blood covers the pillar and the ground around, and Jesus, exhausted from His sleepless night of agony, the ordeal of His mock trial, and the exquisite pain

⁵² St. Aug. On St. John's Gospel, Tract. CXV. 5.

of the scourging, keeps Himself alive only by a miracle in order to reserve for Himself the more cruel punishment of the cross.

Not a sound escaped from the lips of the Holy Victim during this awful torture. "Surely He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows; and we have thought Him, as it were, a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed."⁵³ That terrible scourging He suffered for our sins, especially for the impure sins of the world; that scourging is a protest against the softness, effeminacy, and luxury of the world.

O Christians! behold your Saviour as His torturers untie Him from the pillar and hastily drag on His clothes again, keeping open the gaping wounds. He suffered innocently and complained not; we suffer justly and complain. He who is the pillar of the world is tied to a pillar and scourged; we who are supported by Him find fault if He sends us blessings under the disguise of pain. The cords by which He is bound to the pillar are those of mercy and love by which the bonds of our iniquity are loosened and the gate of heaven is opened for us; they are the cords that hold back the hands of divine justice, provoked by our sins. That pillar is to us as "the pillar of the cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night"⁵⁴ was to the Israelites in their sojourn in the desert lands.

And after the terrible scourging their blood-lust was not satisfied, for "the soldiers plotting a crown of thorns, put it upon His head: and they put on Him a purple garment. And they came to Him and said: Hail, King of the Jews; and they gave Him blows. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith to them: Behold I bring Him forth unto you, that you may

⁵³ Isaias liii. 4, 5.

⁵⁴ Exod. xiii. 22.

know that I find no cause in Him (Jesus therefore came forth, bearing the crown of thorns, and the purple garment). And he saith to them: Behold the Man.”⁵⁵

No words that I or any preacher might say can add to this clear and full account of the Evangelist. With a few strokes by the master-hand of the Blessed John the whole picture stands out in light and shade.

“Behold the Man! Behold the King of the Jews!” See His crown, but it is of thorns, and the thorns are beaten into His adorable head! The blood trickles down His face; He holds a reed in His hand in mockery of His sovereignty; they bend their knees before Him shrieking with derision: “Hail, King of the Jews.” Pilate is the only one who seems to have pity, and he is a pagan.

Yes, behold your God now in His humiliation. What a wonderful change it will be on the last day, when this same Person will come to judge the world! “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty. And He shall send His angels with a trumpet, and a great voice; and they shall gather together the elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them.”⁵⁶

Oh! let us bow down our knees, our heads, and our hearts in real love and adoration before Him now, for the day will surely come when as King He will come in infinite glory to judge us and the whole world. “Thus were fulfilled the very things which Christ had foretold of Himself; thus were the martyrs molded for the endurance of all that their persecutors should be pleased to inflict; thus, by concealing for a time the terror of His power, He commended to us

⁵⁵ John xix. 2-5.

⁵⁶ Matt. xxiv. 30, 31.

the prior imitation of His patience; thus the kingdom which was not of this world overcame that proud world, not by the ferocity of fighting, but by the humility of suffering; and thus the grain of corn that was yet to be multiplied was sown amid the horrors of shame, that it might come to fruition amid the wonders of glory.”⁵⁷

Cruelty begets cruelty, and the hearts of the Jewish priests and people were closed now to all pity. For the third time the Roman Governor had proclaimed the innocence of the Holy Captive, but he was brow-beaten and cowed by the threat: “If thou release this Man, thou art not Cæsar’s friend. For whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar. Away with Him; away with Him, crucify Him. Pilate said to them: Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered: We have no king but Cæsar.”⁵⁸ “And Pilate seeing that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was made, taking water washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just Man; look you to it. And the whole people answering, said: His blood be upon us and upon our children.”⁵⁹

Ah! Pilate cannot wash away the horrible sin of injustice from his soul as easily as he was able to wash his hands; neither can we by protestations of virtue whilst in reality living lives of sin satisfy the justice of God.

The Roman power was hated by the Jews, and yet they were willing to acknowledge it in order to put to death their own real King; the horrible malediction by which they cursed themselves and their children fell upon them, and the blood of Christ instead of cleansing them from sin was made by them a cause of deeper guilt and more lasting infamy. They lost their God,

⁵⁷ St. Aug. On St. John’s Gospel, Tract. CXVI, I.

⁵⁸ John xiv. 12–15.

⁵⁹ Matt. xxvii. 24, 25.

they lost their nation, and are scattered, a marked people, all over the earth. "Then therefore Pilate delivered Him to them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led Him forth. And bearing His own cross, He went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha." ⁶⁰

A long road, since hallowed by the veneration of centuries and trodden by millions of loving pilgrims, now opened before Him. This road descended from Pilate's palace down into a valley, and up again a steep hill-side, out beyond the city walls, to the place of execution. Jesus, the Saviour of the world, opened His arms to embrace His heavy cross, and they laid it upon His shoulders, like on any common criminal or slave. The sorrowful procession then began; at its head rode a Roman centurion on horseback, behind came the soldiers, and in the midst stumbled along the eternal Son of God, surrounded by the jeering priests and mob. On His head He bore the crown of thorns; about His neck hung the tablet, the record of His condemnation; from the roofs of the houses, and from the sides of the streets through which He passed, He was stared at and mocked by an insolent crowd of sight-seers.

Jesus dragged that heavy badge of infamy, His cross, over the rough stones of Jerusalem, and up the road which climbs to Calvary. Three times did His strength fail, and the Supporter of the universe fell heavily under the weight of that cross. His shoulder was lacerated to the very bone by its galling friction, and He was scarcely able to crawl along by reason of loss of blood and weakness. No gibes, no curses, no blows were spared to urge Him up and onwards, but seeing that further violence would be useless, for their Victim was incapable of carrying the cross any farther, they compelled Simon of Cyrene to carry it after Him. This compulsory service has rendered that man famous

⁶⁰ John xix. 16, 17.

for all time. How do we carry our cross? Do we carry it willingly in imitation of our divine Saviour, or do we bear it under compulsion like Simon of Cyrene? "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."⁶¹

"In the cross is salvation, in the cross is life, in the cross protection from our foes, in the cross is sweetness poured out from above, in the cross is strength of mind, in the cross is spiritual joy, in the cross is the sum of virtues, in the cross is perfect holiness. There is no saving for the soul, no hope of eternal life, save in the cross. Take, then, your cross and follow Jesus, and you shall go to everlasting life."⁶²

What pen or tongue or picture can adequately describe the meeting on the way to Calvary of Jesus and His holy Mother? Who can fathom the depth of love between these two? Who can measure the almost infinite grief of both in this meeting? If the eyes are the windows of the soul, if heart speaks to heart by a glance, what must have been the language of the eternal Son of God to His Mother at that meeting! It is wholly beyond the power of human mind to convey the love and patience on one side and the maternal pity and grief on the other; no one will ever comprehend the sorrow of that meeting of Son and Mother in that first Way of the Cross.

Many in the crowd had been benefited by the mission of Jesus; many had been cured of maladies by His miracles, and now they looked on in curiosity, without pity in their hearts, and even openly hostile.

"A great spectacle! But then to impiety, a great disport to look upon; to piety a great mystery; impiety sees in it a great display of ignominy; piety, a great strengthening of faith; impiety looks on, and laughs at a King bearing, instead of the rod of sovereignty, the

⁶¹ Matt. xvi. 24.

⁶² "Imitation of Christ,"
Book II. chap. 12.

wood of His punishment; piety looks on and sees the King bearing that cross for Himself to be fixed thereon, which He would thereafter fix even on the brows of kings; an object of contempt in the eyes of the impious, in that same thing in which thereafter the hearts of the saints should glory.”⁶³

No one can fully describe the fearful suffering that Jesus underwent in carrying that cross. For being treated roughly before He took it upon Himself, all His wounds of the scourging were torn open afresh, His natural strength was exhausted by the sweat of blood and the subsequent horrible scourging; not a particle of food or drink had passed His lips, and in the heat of the almost noon-day sun He carried that cross from Pilate's palace at one end of the city to Calvary at the other. But it was not so much the weight of the cross itself that pressed so heavily upon Him; it was the weight of the sins of mankind that pressed Him down beneath their heavy load: your sins and mine, that caused Him to stumble and heavily fall. As of old Isaac carried upon his shoulders up the mountain the wood upon which He was to be immolated as a holocaust by his father,⁶⁴ so Jesus Christ, the reality of that figure, carried the wood upon which He was to be sacrificed up the mountain, a sacrifice to His Father for the sins of men.

At length the summit is reached; every step of the way is marked by large blotches of His precious blood, and Jesus is breathless, bereft of strength, and powerless. With weary, failing sight He looks around; the mob arranged itself around the hill, and beside Him are the cross, the nails, the hammers, the ladders, and the ropes. At the nearness of the awful hour, and the sight of the instruments of torture, a shudder runs through His whole frame, yet His holy soul was stead-

⁶³ St. Aug. On St. John's Gospel, Tract. CXVII. 3.

⁶⁴ Gen. xxii.

fast, waiting for that death that was to give us eternal life.

Then they roughly stripped Him of His garments, and laying Him upon the cross, the soldier took hold of His right hand, and placing a large nail in the middle of the palm drove it with strokes of the hammer through the nerves into the wood. The blood spurted up into the face of the soldier, ran down into his hands, and between his fingers; the same process was gone through with His left hand and with His feet. Then they put ropes around the arms of the cross, and slowly, slowly raised it; higher and higher the body dripping blood was lifted until an almost perpendicular position was attained, and then a dull thud as the cross slipped into the hole prepared for it, and the Eternal Son was raised up a sacrifice for the sins of men.

O sinners! behold your Saviour fastened to the cross by nails; His arms are outstretched to embrace the whole world; He is raised up aloft between heaven and earth. Over His head was written in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."⁶⁵ For these three languages were conspicuous in that place beyond all others; the Hebrew, on account of the Jews, who glorified in the law of God; the Greek, because of the wise men among the Gentiles; and the Latin, on account of the Romans, who at that very time were exercising sovereign power over many and almost all countries.⁶⁶

Well did He fulfil what Isaias prophesied of Him eight centuries before: "He was offered because it was His own will, and He opened not His mouth; He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before His shearer, and He shall not open His mouth."⁶⁷ Yes, He sacrificed His power

⁶⁵ John xix. 19.

⁶⁶ St. Aug. On St. John's

Gospel, Tract. CXVII. 4.

⁶⁷ Isaias liii. 7.

and His will by the death of the cross, for the hands are the emblem of power and the feet are the emblems of the will. "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross." ⁶⁸

And now He is lifted up upon the gibbet; in the distance the bright April midday sunlight is reflected from the roof and tapering minarets of the temple, bringing out all its beauty and splendor. His memory goes back to the time when, an Infant, He was carried into that temple by His young Mother, and offered Himself to His eternal Father by the hands of the officiating priest according to the law, and holy Simeon took Him unto his arms, rejoiced that he had seen the Christ, and then sang his *Nunc Dimittis*: "Now dost Thou dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word in peace; because my eyes have seen Thy salvation." ⁶⁹

And He knew of the sword of grief that entered His Mother's soul when the holy man prophesied: "Behold, this Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted; and thy own soul a sword shall pierce." ⁷⁰ That offering made in His infant days is now being perfected, and the sword has entered His Mother's soul even up to the hilt.

He looks down on Jerusalem over which He, the most perfect Patriot, wept tears of compassion and love. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not." ⁷¹ And she has cast out the One lovingly foretold by the prophets, and He is now here crucified on the hill, cast out of the city of His love. And He looks beyond over the spreading country all

⁶⁸ Phil. ii. 8.

⁶⁹ Luke ii. 29, 30.

⁷⁰ Luke ii. 34, 35.

⁷¹ Matt. xxiii. 37.

bathed in the clear, glorious spring sunlight, as far as the eye can reach; the birds are twittering and singing, and flying high up in the air or from branch to branch of the trees.

In that very land, long, long ago, Melchisedech had met Abraham, and blessed him and his posterity. And He looks nearer; surrounding the hill in a ring are His enemies, the outermost part composed of the dregs and the rabble of Jerusalem. Nearer to Him are the priests who had incited that mob to His death, and as they looked up sneeringly and mockingly into His face, they said: "Vah, Thou that destroyed the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it, save Thy own self; if Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. . . . He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him now deliver Him if He will have Him; for He said, I am the Son of God."⁷² They denied His promised resurrection; they confessed that He saved others, and testified His claim to be the Son of God; in this they sinned against the light, and committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, mentioned by our Saviour as unpardonable because it blinds the soul.

Besides Jesus, on His right and left, two thieves were crucified, who also blasphemed Him, and mocked at Him. And Mary, His Mother, stood at the foot of that cross of shame! What agony unutterable must have rent her soul as she looked up into the face of her Son! She thinks of the years that are past; of His infancy; His childhood, His boyhood; His glorious manhood. Her mind goes back to the days of Bethlehem and of Nazareth, of His wonderful and intimate talks with her and her husband, St. Joseph—talks that became, if possible, more intimate when the head of the Holy Family passed away. Her mind reviewed

⁷² Matt. xxvii. 40, 42, 43.

the whole Hidden Life with its beauty, obedience, and love.

And the other Mary was there—she of Magdala—crouched at the foot of the cross, and on her head and hands fell the blood of Him who had said: “Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much.”⁷³ The immaculate Mother of God and the wanton woman of the street met at the foot of the cross, and from it drew all their grace and merit.

And John too, John the Divine, was the only man of all the Apostles who was faithful to the bitter end. He was there, and from the heart of Him who hung upon that cross, as from the same heart upon which he leaned His head at the Supper the night before, he drew that great love for which he is remarkable.

During all this time not a word has been uttered by the Holy Victim; He is sagging, slowly sagging upon that cross; if He rests His head the thorns are an agony; if He throws it forward it increases the pull on the hands. Now he prays for those who have done Him to death: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”⁷⁴ They were killing the God-Man, and He was interceding for them to be pardoned!

And now Jesus commends His Mother to the guardianship of St. John: “Woman, behold thy son. After that He saith to the disciple: Behold thy Mother.”⁷⁵ O thou blessed beloved disciple! Never before was such a trust committed to man. Thou art to take the place of the sweetest, the holiest, the loveliest Being that ever lived on earth—the eternal Son of God, the Son of Mary.

The awful agony of thirst from loss of blood is burning His whole frame with an intolerable fire. His tongue is parched, and the agony wrings from Him the mysterious cry: “I thirst.”⁷⁶ That cry did not so

⁷³ Luke vii. 47.

⁷⁴ Luke xxiii. 34.

⁷⁵ John xix. 26, 27.

⁷⁶ John xix. 28.

much express the fever of body, by which He was consumed, as the burning thirst of His soul for the salvation of men: "I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?" ⁷⁷

Jesus was naked upon the cross; the holy and most pure Son of God was completely stripped of His clothes, and exposed to the gaze of the scoffing multitude. "The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Him, took His garments (and they made four parts: to every soldier a part) and also His coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said then one to another: Let us not cut it, but let us cast lots for it whose it shall be. That the Scripture might be fulfilled, saying: They have parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture they have cast lot." ⁷⁸

"Some one, perhaps, may inquire what is signified by the division that was made of His garments into so many parts, and of the casting of lots for the coat. The raiment of the Lord Jesus Christ, parted into four, symbolized His quadripartite Church, as spread abroad over the whole world, which consists of four quarters, and equally, that is to say, that He will send His angels to gather His elect from the four winds; and what is that, but from the four quarters of the world, east, west, north and south? But the coat, on which lots were cast, signifies the unity of all the parts, which is contained in the bond of charity." ⁷⁹ The Creator, Ruler, and Owner of the universe died bereft of everything, even of His clothing; He gave up everything to teach us that we must not place our souls in jeopardy by bartering them for the goods of this world.

And now a most wonderful triumph of God's grace and mercy happened. "One of those robbers who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying: If Thou be the

⁷⁷ Luke xii. 49.

⁷⁸ John xix. 23, 24.

⁷⁹ St. Aug. On St. John's Gospel, Tract. CXVIII. 4.

Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other answering, rebuked him, saying: Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this Man hath done no evil. And he said to Jesus: Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said to him: Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.”⁸⁰

Oh, the wonders of God’s mercy! The three were dying beside one another: one kept on blaspheming and died, the other made his act of faith and contrition and died, the Third opened the gates of heaven to him. The lesson is, we must never despair, but neither must we presume on God’s mercy.

And now minute by minute the time wears on; not a sound is heard save the labored breathings of the Divine Victim and of the thieves on their crosses, growing fainter and fainter as death comes on. The head of the Crucified in the center has fallen forward upon His chest, causing His body to sag; the others move uneasily to find some comfort in their tortures. Darkness spreads over the earth like a funeral pall, for the sun refuses his light at the death of his Maker; the God of the universe is dying and nature puts on mourning.

“O my people, what have I done to thee? or in what have I afflicted thee? Answer Me. Because I led thee out of the land of Egypt thou hast prepared a cross for thy Saviour. Because I led thee out through the desert for forty years, and fed thee with manna, and brought thee into a land exceedingly good, thou hast prepared a cross for thy Saviour. What more ought I do for thee, and have not done it? I planted thee indeed my most beautiful vineyard, and thou art become to me exceedingly bitter, for thou hast given

⁸⁰ Luke xxiii. 39-43.

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

“Be not affrighted: you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: He is risen, He is not here, behold the place where they laid Him.” (Mark xvi 6.)

SYNOPSIS

The grief of the Church at the death of Christ.—How she brings the scenes of the Passion before the people.—Her joy at the Resurrection of Christ.—The precautions of the Jews against any fraud.—The guards at the tomb.—The suspension and anxiety of the three days.—The Resurrection: Christ glorious and triumphant.—His first appearance to His Mother.—The holy women at the tomb.—Nothing can shake the testimony.—The guards are told to lie.—St. Augustine on this lie.—All know it now.—The Apostles never reproached with stealing the body.—Father Faber on the Hidden Life and the Resurrection.—St. Thomas and his unbelief.—St. Gregory on the doubt of St. Thomas.—The Holy Trinity rejoices.—Mary and Joseph and all heaven rejoice.—Why we should rejoice.—Who He is who arose from the dead.—What He did for us.—The Church and the Resurrection.—St. Paul and the Resurrection.—Christ’s Resurrection is the pledge of ours.—St. Augustine on this pledge.—What we should do to insure this pledge.—St. Augustine on our duty to the Risen Saviour.—He retains His wounds.—Ederheim on the importance of the Resurrection.—Last appeal.

FOR the past few days the Church of God put on the garments of mourning, and called upon her children to lament and weep. In her ceremonies and her plaintive chant she showed forth and gave utterance to the intense grief of her heart. A gloom, as it were, of death settled down upon her because she was bemoaning the sufferings and death of her most holy Founder and Spouse.

She led us, step by step, through all the scenes of the Passion of the Son of God. Awe-stricken and in breathless silence we gazed upon the prostrate form of

the agonizing Saviour, as He lay bathed in a sweat of blood in the garden of Gethsemani. With St. Peter we followed Him, after the traitorous kiss of Judas and His arrest by the mob, and were with Him throughout the rest of the night in the guard-room of the palace of Caiphas. We saw him scourged and mocked at. The fearful cry for His blood and of self-imprecation of the Jewish rabble: "Let Him be crucified. His blood be upon us and upon our children,"¹ is still ringing in our ears. We heard His unjust condemnation, followed Him bearing His cross through the streets of Jerusalem, and up the slope of Calvary, marking every blood-stained spot of ground. With breaking heart and tear-filled eyes we saw Him stripped and nailed to the cross; every blow of the hammer as it drove the nails into His hands and feet sounded in our ears, and our souls gave forth a responsive pang of agony. We beheld Him exalted upon the cross between two robbers, and when the scoffing crowd went away we were glad to draw closer to that cross and kiss it, and with Mary His Mother and St. John have some drops of His precious blood fall upon us to cleanse our sin-stained souls. We helped to take His dead body down from that gibbet of His shame and triumph, and lay it tenderly and lovingly in the arms of His Mother. We saw Him carried to the tomb, and watched the large slab being placed over its mouth, and departed with His holy Mother and St. John, sad and disconsolate.

But now all is changed:

"Gone are Lent's shadows, its gloom and its sadness,
Our sorrow has turned to rejoicing and love;
Death's power has been conquered, our Saviour is risen,
He lives, and He reigns in the heavens above!"²

Yes, today the Church rejoicing calls upon her chil-

¹ Matt. xxvii. 23, 25.

² Anon.

Me vinegar in My thirst; and with a spear thou hast pierced the side of thy Saviour. For thy sake I scourged Egypt with its first-born; and thou didst scourge Me and deliver Me up. I led thee out of Egypt, drowning Pharaoh in the Red Sea; and thou didst deliver Me up to the chief priests. Before thee I opened the sea, and thou didst open My side with a spear. I went before thee in a pillar of a cloud, and Thou didst lead Me to the judgment-hall of Pilate. I fed thee with manna through the desert, and thou didst strike Me with blows and scourges. I gave thee to drink the water of salvation from the rock, and thou gavest Me gall and vinegar. For thee I struck the kings of the Canaanites; and thou didst strike My head with a reed. I gave thee a royal sceptre, and thou didst give to My head a crown of thorns. I lifted thee up with great power, and thou didst hang Me upon the gibbet of the cross.”⁸¹

The sun is fast westering, it is coming on to three o'clock in the afternoon. “And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice: My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”⁸² Truly did He drain to the dregs the cup of sorrow; truly did David prophesy: “Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul. I stick fast in the mire of the deep, and there is no sure standing. I am come into the depth of the sea, and a tempest hath overwhelmed Me.”⁸³

The sacrifice is complete. He said: “It is consummated,”⁸⁴ and waking up as a giant from sleep, “Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said: Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit,”⁸⁵ and all was over: He was dead. That cry resounded around the hill of

⁸¹ The Reproaches—Good Friday's Office.

⁸² Mark xv. 34.

⁸³ Ps. lviii. 2, 3.

⁸⁴ John xix. 30.

⁸⁵ Luke xxiii. 46.

Calvary; the earth quaked in fear; it woke the dead from their graves, and tore the veil of the temple from the top to the bottom.

“And the centurion who stood over against Him, seeing that crying out in this manner He had given up the ghost, said: Indeed this Man was the Son of God.”⁸⁶ Yes, truly this is the Son of God; by His death He overcame the world of sin and hell: His death was the triumph of God’s unutterable, undying love. “He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; the answer to every riddle, the key to every mystery, the term of all human knowledge, the beacon of all human hope, the fulfilling of all human desire. The magic of His Name, and the burning of His words, and the strength of His example did not die with Him on Calvary, but down the hoary centuries has extended the sweet influence of light and healing and inspiration that has made the young to leap to His arms and the old to crouch at His feet.

“As the sea lifts up his hands to the sun, and the voices of many waters beat out their lamentations to the midnight skies, so are the hands of all Thy people lifted up to Thee on the cross, O Christ the Consoler, and the cries of humanity are echoed from Thy Sacred Heart, in accents of mercy, and pardon, and love.”⁸⁷ Amen.

⁸⁶ Mark xv. 39.

⁸⁷ Canon Sheehan, “The Triumph of Failure,” p. 201.

dren to be glad and exult, because "the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."³

Today she has thrown aside her garments of mourning, and steps forth as a bride gloriously clad to greet her Spouse, the risen Saviour. Today from the priest and the pontiff at the altar, and from the monk and the nun in the choir, are wafted heavenwards on angel's wings pæans of joy and gladness. "It is truly worthy and just, fit and salutary to praise Thee, O Lord, at all times, but most especially on this day, when Christ our Pasch is immolated. For He is truly the Lamb, who has taken away the sins of the world, who by dying destroyed our death, and by rising again repaired our life."⁴ Alleluia! Alleluia!! Alleluia!!! "This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad therein."⁵

We are told in the inspired history of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ that, after He was taken down from the cross, and placed in the tomb, His Mother and St. John and Mary Magdalen went back to Jerusalem. Oh, how that Mother's heart must have been saturated with grief! Her Son Jesus, the treasure of her soul, the light of her eyes, her very life, was no longer with her now. He had been foully treated and done to death in the most horrible fashion.

The Sabbath evening darkened into night and fell upon that tomb of the Lord and Creator. All was dark within that tomb. Not a sound was to be heard save the subdued voices of the guards; maybe the distant murmur of the city's life or the barking of dogs broke the silence. The night wind sighing through the branches of the trees kept up a rustling sound, as if some uneasy spirit were hovering around. All that night, and during the whole of the following day, which was the great Sabbath of the Jews, those sol-

³ Luke xxiv. 34.

⁴ Preface of the day.

⁵ Antiphon in the Office.

diers kept watch and ward over that tomb. What was the reason for such extraordinary precaution? Was it not strange that these picked men, temple guards, should be placed to watch the grave of a dead man?

The answer is given in the words of St. Matthew, for he tells us that "the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying: Sir, we have remembered that that Seducer said, while He was yet alive: After three days I will rise again. Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day: lest perhaps his disciples come and steal Him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead; and the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate saith to them: You have a guard; go, guard it as you know. And they departing, made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting guards." ⁶

Some unaccountable fear and dread must have filled the minds of those guards. Why should they be placed in such an unusual situation? Their minds must have been apprehensive of some foreboding, else why were they here? They must have heard of and seen the wonderful things that had been done by the One who now lay in that tomb. Maybe some of them were among those who, led by His enemies, had insulted Him and had joined in the terrible cry for His death. Maybe some of them had seen Him die upon the cross, and had wagged their heads at Him, and blasphemed Him. They were now determined to stand by their post, that no one should approach to steal away that body. He was dead now, and His cause was a failure, and they determined to keep it a failure. It would be death for any one to come there and try to steal that body. The guards had the strictest orders, and the stone over the mouth of the sepulchre was sealed by the priestly authority.

And now the Sabbath day and evening are past, and

⁶ Matt. xxvii. 62-66.

night has again settled upon the tomb; it is the second night of the burial. If tomorrow's sun will have risen and set upon the undisturbed grave of the dead Christ, then all is over, all He preached was a lie, all His wonders were deceptions on the people, He was truly as they said He was—the incarnation of Satan; for “the Pharisees said, By the prince of devils He casteth out devils.”⁷ Upon the issue of the morrow will depend whether He is the eternal Son of God or the greatest imposter that ever lived. Whether Judaism is true and Christianity is false. Whether His predictions were the delirious dreams of a false prophet or the true and literal promises of the Eternal God. Life and death were hanging in the balance. A question that will change the face of society, and stamp the seal of eternal truth upon the Church, is soon to be answered. Will He whom the Jews crucified to death as an imposter do what He said He would do: “After three days I will rise again”? Or will he lie there in that tomb to rot away?

O God, what a terrible doubt this is for the minds of the wavering! He had allowed the devil to have apparent triumph over Him. He had permitted death to have apparent victory. What if that triumph and victory should be true!

And yet the sealed tomb can tell us nothing. The dead Christ is surely within, and the soldiers are without, guarding. Hour follows hour: slowly, slowly like a silently flowing stream, time moves along in its never-ceasing course. The night is deepening, and at last midnight is here. The third day has arrived! Will he arise today? O Christ, remember Thy promise! Come forth from that tomb glorious and immortal. Let Thy holy soul come back to give life to those lifeless limbs, to give sight to those sightless eyes, to give strength and beauty to Thy disfigured body!

⁷ Matt. ix. 34.

O Father of heaven, what is this that we behold? What is that light which is dazzling our eyes? It is the most holy soul of our Saviour coming to be reunited with His sacred body. Suddenly the seals are broken, and the great stone is hurled back with terrific power from the mouth of the sepulchre. From out that tomb bursts the glorified and conquering Saviour. Much more than on Thabor, "His face did shine as the sun: and His garments became white as snow,"⁸ and His sacred wounds shone with brilliancy. The soldiers, unable to stand the wonder, fall prone upon the earth, and tremble at the miracle; then somewhat recovering, they ran back to the city and told what had happened.

Thanksgiving and praise and honor to the Lord our God, and to His Son Jesus Christ, our risen Saviour, because He has fulfilled His promise. He has risen by His own power from the dead. "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?"⁹

Where, O my Saviour, are the signs of Thy terrible Passion? Where are the blood-stains on Thy adorable face? Where are the marks of the bloody scourging? Where the wound on Thy shoulder from the weight of the cross, and the impressions of the crown of thorns upon Thy brow? All is gone—gone forever. Thy face and the wounds in Thy hands and feet and side shine brightly and will remain forever as testimony of Thy sufferings.

Behold Jesus our Saviour rising glorious from His tomb. Well might David prophesy of Him: "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast received gifts in men."¹⁰ He is the same One whom the Jews reviled, insulted, and blasphemed; He is the same One whom, a few days

⁸ Matt. xvii. 2.

¹⁰ Ps. lxvii. 19.

⁹ I. Cor. xv. 54, 55.

before, they nailed as an imposter to the cross. No one was then more despised than He, now there is no one more glorious.

Oh, how the Eternal Father was pleased to see His only-begotten Son rise glorious and triumphant from the dead! How the Eternal Son Himself rejoiced at His resurrection! How the Holy Ghost exulted at the fulfilment of the prophecy of the Son! The angels of heaven burst forth into greater songs of praise and jubilation than at His Nativity when they saw their Lord and Saviour finish His work and rise from that tomb of His death into the full, glorious noon-tide of His immortality. But greater joy and thanksgiving were in the heart of His dear Mother. Although the Evangelists narrate that He appeared first to Mary Magdalen we may piously and truthfully believe that His first visit was to His Mother. Many a time must He have told her of His future sufferings. Many a time must her heart have been saddened by the vision of the cross as she saw Him grow from childhood into boyhood and manhood. And although she knew from Him that He would arise again, yet she felt the poignancy of her grief. She watched and waited patiently at home, and her patience was rewarded. Silently, quietly in that early morning hour He once more stood before her. His radiant face beamed with smiles, and His word—the old familiar word—Mother, came from His lips. Oh, with what love she clasped her Son in her arms! What words of love burst forth from her heart! My Son! My Son! and kissed Him and adored Him. She saw Him once again, not disfigured by blows and befouled by blood and spittle, and she could well use the words of the Psalmist: “Thou art beautiful above the sons of men; grace is poured abroad in Thy lips; therefore hath God blessed Thee forever.”¹¹

¹¹ Ps. xliv. 3.

And the Resurrection must have given joy to those who had steadfastly followed Him over the sorrowful way of His cross, and are now rewarded by the vision of Him.

Yes, Christ has truly risen, and has gone the way of His eternal glory. The hills and the mountains of Judea bow before the assertion of His sovereignty. He has left behind Him an empty tomb.

The morning came and the dark clouds of night disappeared. The sun came forth in all his glorious brilliancy, lighting up the hills and the valleys of Judea and Galilee, and reflecting the bronze and gold on the minarets of the temple. His radiance of the spring-time diffused itself over things, and the very birds seemed to revel in the new-born day.

Let the Evangelist St. Mark tell us the story of the Resurrection. "When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought sweet spices, that coming, they might anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they come to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen. And they said one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And looking, they saw the stone rolled back. For it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side clothed with a white robe: and they were astonished. Who said to them: Be not affrighted; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: He is risen, He is not here, behold the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee; there you shall see Him, as He told you."¹²

All the ingenuity of a wicked and incredulous world, all the malice and hatred of hell have never been able to disprove this simple narrative of St. Mark. And

¹² Mark xvi. 1-7.

not only has he given it, but the account is given by the other three Evangelists.

The Resurrection is the miracle of miracles, it is that upon which our Saviour based all His teaching, it is beyond all others the proof and the pledge of His divinity. Others before Him had raised the dead to life, as was done after Him, but no one ever raised himself to life. Jesus our Saviour by his own power raised Himself from the dead, because He is the Author of life and death, He is the eternal Son of God.

The Apostles, notwithstanding that Jesus had prophesied this wondrous miracle, doubted its truth when the account was brought to them by Mary Magdalen and the holy women who had gone to the tomb and had heard the words of the angel. The soldiers who were on guard were only too well aware of its reality, for they came into the city and told the chief priests all things that had been done. "And they being assembled together with the ancients, taking counsel, gave a great sum of money to the soldiers, saying: Say you, His disciples came by night and stole Him away when we were asleep. And if the Governor shall hear of this, we will persuade him and secure you. So they taking the money did as they were taught."¹³

This shows that they who had Him condemned, they who hated and despised Him, they who imagined they were victorious at His death, had now to acknowledge their defeat and tried to cover up the miracle by bribery and lying. They had picked their own guards, they had used all precautions, they had sealed up the tomb, and now they were foiled and confounded by their own witnesses. St. Augustine, with his usual brilliancy, shows up their futile lying when he says: "What did you say, O stupid cunning? Were you indeed so utterly void of the light of godly wisdom,

¹³ Matt. xxviii. 11-15.

and confounded in the bottomless pit of your own falsehood, as to tell them to say: 'His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we were asleep?' Part of the testimony of your eye-witnesses was that they were asleep at the time: you yourself were asleep not to be able to see that on their own testimony their testimony must have been worthless."¹⁴ The guards knew it, the Jewish chief priests and ancients knew it, the holy women and the Apostles knew it, and the world from that day to this knows it.

No miracle of our Lord, no detail in His life, is as well attested and proved as His Resurrection. The stone could not be removed from the mouth of the sepulchre without the knowledge of the guards. If the guards were asleep, how did they know that the body was stolen? If they were not asleep, why did they allow it to be taken away? The Apostles had fled in fear, and seem not to be sure He would rise again, and in fact hardly believed that He had done so.

The Jews never reproached the Apostles with stealing the body of our Lord. They indeed forbade them to preach in His name, they scourged them and jailed them and killed them, but they never once accused them of foisting a false resurrection upon the people. In his usual lucid style Father Faber speaks thus of the Resurrection: "While the shame had been in the light of day, and on the bare hill-top, and in the sight of hostile multitudes, the Resurrection was accomplished in the grey of early dawn, without ministers or witnesses but a group of holy angels who needed neither proof nor evidence. Here is the same propensity to a Hidden Life which our Lord vouchsafes to manifest everywhere. Preparations are even made beforehand for the more complete concealment of this glorious mystery. Men are allowed to remember that He had predicted His Resurrection, and to suspect

¹⁴ On Ps. lxiii. 7.

that His Apostles will steal His body away and falsely assert that He has risen; and the guards who are set to watch are bribed to withhold such evidence as they could have given and which they themselves could not have explained. Thus in the most natural way did our Lord continue to hide the splendor of His Resurrection. But if, as might well be conceived, human eyes were unworthy to behold that surpassing mystery, we might expect that when risen He would manifest Himself in His strength as He had manifested Himself in His weakness. The Resurrection was the grand evidence of His religion. The primary object for which the college of Apostles was instituted, and the vacancy of Judas filled up, was to bear testimony to the Resurrection, in that they had seen and conversed with Jesus risen.

“But if it was so important that the evidence of this mystery should be established to the satisfaction of the whole world, if the salvation of countless souls depended upon it, if the Apostles were appointed mainly or at least primarily because of it, the Forty Days of His Risen Life will at least be marked by some degree of additional publicity. Just the contrary. It is the most mysteriously hidden life of all. Bethlehem was notoriety and Nazareth an outward life compared with this. He certainly remained on earth for forty days; but where He was and how He spent the time we do not know. He kept appearing here and there, from time to time, now to one, now to another, one while to a few, another while to many. Some fourteen of these gracious apparitions are recorded. Even as appearances they are filled with secrecy and concealment. When He appeared to the two disciples going to Emmaus, He only disclosed Himself as He was vanishing. When He showed Himself to Magdalen, it was under the species of a gardener, not His own. When he appeared at the lake, they did not know it

was He, and then it flashed upon them, and they cried, It is the Lord! At another apparition, while many believed, some doubted. What passed between His Apostles and Himself respecting the kingdom of God, the constitution of the Church, the matter and form of the Sacraments, and the like, was not committed to the publicity of the Written Word but shrouded in the guise of the apostolical tradition. What else He did and where He went we cannot tell.”¹⁵

All doubt of the Resurrection is taken away by the unbelief of the Apostle St. Thomas. St. John the Evangelist gives us the account of that disbelief and of the subsequent act of faith made by the apostle. He tells us that our Lord appeared to the Apostles in the late afternoon of the day of His Resurrection, and that Thomas was absent. He then continues by saying: “Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into His side, I will not believe. And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then He saith to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see My hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered, and said to Him: My Lord, and my God. Jesus saith to him: Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.”¹⁶

What infinite condescension this is on the part of our Lord and Saviour. Instead of upbraiding the pride and incredulity of Thomas He deigns to have the

¹⁵ “The Blessed Sacrament,”
p. 277.

¹⁶ John xx. 24-29.

apostle touch Him and subjects Himself and His Resurrection to the proof of this self-sufficient, doubting man. But St. Gregory the Great tells us of the good that comes to us through his doubt. "To what, my most dear brethren, do your minds turn at these things? Do you believe it to be by chance, that this chosen disciple was absent, and coming afterwards heard, and hearing doubted, and doubting felt, and feeling believed? This was not by chance, but was done by divine dispensation. For divine clemency acted in a wonderful manner, that the doubting disciple, while he felt in his Master the wounds in His flesh, healed in us the wounds of our faithlessness. For the doubt of Thomas is more advantageous to us than the faith of the believing disciples. Because while he is brought back to belief by feeling, our minds are made firm, and all doubt is cast aside." ¹⁷

So we too ought to rejoice in this great and glorious day with the Holy Trinity, with Mary and Joseph and the whole court of heaven, on our Lord's account and on our own. He who is risen in so bright glory is our Father, our God, our Kinsman, and our Brother. He it is who redeemed us at an infinite price, the price of His precious blood. It is He who came in poverty as a Babe in Bethlehem, to teach us humility and self-abnegation. It is He who suffered the agonies of the scourging, the crown of thorns, and the shame of the crucifixion. And all this that He might appease the wrath of His Father towards us, and by His obedience cancel our sins of disobedience.

He did all this to show how much He loves us, and was willing that His Sacred Heart should be pierced with a spear to pour out the last drops of His precious blood. Is it not right and just, then, that we who have been bought at so great a price should exult and rejoice that our divine Master has risen from the tomb,

¹⁷ Sermon XXVI. On the Gospels.

glorious and triumphant over death and hell? It was for us that He chose to drain to the dregs the bitter chalice of His Passion. If we have any sentiments of love and zeal, how should we be transported with joy to see Him enter upon His glorious life! Should we not be glad today when we know that He whom the Jews crucified and wrote over His head in derision. "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews,"¹⁸ has risen the King of all ages and the Judge of all men?

He is the King of His kingdom the Church, and the Church believes in the Resurrection of her Founder. For that Resurrection she hoped, and she was there to greet Him as He burst from the tomb, and sent her upon her world-wide mission. And so we ought to rejoice on our own account, because the Resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of our hope of eternal life. For as He arose from the dead after all His humiliations and sufferings, so shall we too, if we bear our trials and humiliations, rise glorious and triumphant.

Without the final climax of Christ's Resurrection, the great scheme of our redemption and future resurrection would have been incomplete. St. Paul says: "If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have given testimony against God, that He hath raised up Christ; whom He hath not raised up, if the dead rise not again. For if the dead rise not again, neither is Christ risen again. And if Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins. But now Christ is risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep: For by a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead. And as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive."¹⁹ And He "will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of His glory, according to the operation whereby

¹⁸ John xix. 19.

¹⁹ I. Cor. xv. 14-22.

also He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.”²⁰

Oh, what a happy and consoling thought it is to know that no matter how much we suffer in this life, no matter how much men may despise us, still God loves us if we try in humility to serve Him, and will one day raise us up glorious and immortal and triumphant over all enemies! Then will those who are mean and despicable in the eyes of the world be truly the companions of Christ in His glory. What a consolation it is to know that the most abandoned man who walks the earth today, if he have the love of God in his soul and die in that state will, in the future resurrection of the body, rise beautiful and glorious and immortal! It is natural that members should follow their head; Christ our Head is risen from the dead, and sitteth at the right hand of His eternal Father. So shall we follow Him and have a place in His kingdom if we serve Him here. “Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow His steps.”²¹

The Resurrection of Christ takes away the sting and terror of death. For as He by His death was separated from His holy Mother and His friends only for a few days, so we also by death are parted from our friends and those we love only for a short time.

St. Augustine says beautifully: “Since no man comes to death but by Adam, no man to life but by Christ. Because we have lived, we died: because He liveth, we shall live. We died to Him, when we lived to ourselves; but because He died for us, both to Himself He liveth, we shall live also. By ourselves indeed we were able to have death, but not so are we able also by ourselves to have life.”²²

Holy Job of old, cast down by trials and afflictions, and illumined by the Holy Ghost, cried out: “I

²⁰ Phil. iii. 21.

²¹ I. Pet. ii. 21.

²² On St. John's Gospel, Ser. LXXV. 3.

know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin and in my flesh I shall see my God. Whom I myself shall see and my eyes shall behold, and not another: this my hope is laid up in my bosom.”²³ So shall it be with us too. We our very selves, if we serve the Lord, as Job served Him, *we*, with our own eyes, shall see the glory of our Risen Saviour. If we wish to see His glory and enter His heavenly kingdom we must do as He says, we must love Him and keep His commandments, for He Himself says: “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me. And he that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father: and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”²⁴

Christ entered into His glory through the Red Sea of His blood. “Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day: And that penance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all nations.”²⁵ He did not spare Himself for us, but did the will of His eternal Father even to the bitter end. “He that spared not even his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath he not also, with Him, given us all things?”²⁶ Shall we then be stingy and niggardly with Him? Shall we grudge Him the little love of our finite hearts? His Sacred Heart is burning with an infinite love for us, and He is ever asking for the love of our hearts. “Son, give me Thy heart, and let Thy eyes keep My ways.”²⁷ Give then your heart to Him, give it all to Him. Do not let the follies and frivolities of the world fill it, but fill it instead with the love of God.

The great doctor of the Church, St. Augustine, says: “For what pride can be healed, if it be not healed by

²³ Job xix. 25-27.

²⁴ John xiv. 21.

²⁵ Luke xxiv. 46, 47.

²⁶ Rom. viii. 32.

²⁷ Prov. xxiii. 26.

the humiliation of the Son of God? What covetousness can be healed, if it be not healed by the poverty of the Son of God? What wrath can be healed, if it be not healed by the long-suffering of the Son of God? What ungodliness can be healed, if it be not healed by the love of the Son of God? Finally, what fearfulness can be healed, if it be not healed by the Resurrection of the body of Christ the Lord? Let the race of man lift up its hope, and learn to know its own nature; let it see how great a place it has in the works of God. Despise not yourselves, ye men; the Son of God took upon Him the nature of a man. Despise not yourselves, ye women; the Son of God was born of a woman. Yet love not the things of the flesh.”²⁸

Christ our Lord in His glorified state still has for us an infinite love, a love as ardent and as tender as when He hung for our salvation upon the gibbet of the cross. He is always pleading for us to His Father: His five sacred wounds, the evidences of His Passion, are so many eloquent advocates interceding for us. He has bought us at an inestimable price; shall we suffer that price to be paid in vain? St. Paul tells us: “You are bought with a price; be not made the bond-slaves of men.”²⁹ And again he says: “Who is he that shall condemn? Christ Jesus that died, yea that is risen also again; who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”³⁰ Our Risen Saviour says to each one of us when He holds out His pierced hands: “Behold, I have graven thee in My hands”³¹ in characters which all eternity will never blot out. But it is in vain that we pretend to belong to Him if we do not make Him an offering

²⁸ Short Treatises, “The Christian Conflict,” No. 12.

²⁹ I. Cor. vii. 23.

³⁰ Rom. viii. 34.

³¹ Isaias xxxix. 16.

of our lives, of all that we are, and of all that we have. He died that we should live, and His Resurrection is the pledge of ours. Let us, then, live for Him, that we may like Him rise glorious and immortal from the grave. Let us, as St. Paul says in today's epistle, "purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new paste, as you are unleavened. For Christ our Pasch is sacrificed. Therefore, let us feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness: but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."³²

The Divinity of Jesus is established by His Resurrection: faith is put beyond all doubt; hope is firmly fixed; and charity burns brighter. "The importance of all this cannot be adequately expressed in words. A dead Christ might have been a Teacher and a Wonder-worker, and remembered and loved as such. But only a Risen and Living Christ could be the Saviour, the Life, and the Life-Giver, and as such preached to all men. And of this most blessed truth we have the fullest and most unquestionable evidence. We can, therefore, implicitly yield ourselves to the impression of these narratives, and, still more, to the realization of that most sacred and blessed fact. This is the foundation of the Church, the inscription on the banner of her armies, the strength and comfort of every Christian heart, and the grand hope of humanity: The Lord is risen indeed."³³

O Jesus, our Risen Saviour, we offer to Thee this day our homage, love, and adoration. Give us strength to do what Thou commandest; lead us without sin over the stormy ocean of life, so that when life is closed we may enter the harbor of rest. May we bear all sufferings as Thou hast borne Thine, that

³² I. Cor. v. 7, 8.

³³ Edersheim.

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Times of Jesus," vol. ii. p

620.

we may arise as Thou hast arisen, O Thou King,
forever and ever.

“O Jesus, Saviour, lead us in,
With Thee in safety to abide,
And call us from the grave of sin,
To rise with Thee this Eastertide.”³⁴

³⁴ Matins hymn, Low Sunday.

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